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MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS

OF

JOHN CONINGTON,

LATE CORPUS PROFESSOR OF LATIN IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

EDITED BY

98254

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WITH A MEMOIR

BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES—VOL. I.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE REPUTATION of Professor CONINGTON as a scholar will rest upon his editions of the Choephoroe and of the works of Virgil and of Persius. As a translator he will continue to be known by his verse renderings of Horace, of the Æneid, and of the Agamemnon. In the Miscellanies now offered to the public he appears both as a scholar and a translator; but their distinctive mark is what, for want of a better phrase, may be styled literary versatility. Professor Conington approached scholarship from the point of view of literature, rather than of philology. As a scholar he was drawn to literature; as a man of letters he inclined to scholarship. Throughout the Miscellanies we trace this blending of his two main interests.

By the arrangement I have adopted in this book, the articles on English literature are followed by what will appear the most important section of the work, the Lectures on the History of Latin Poetry. To these succeed a few papers of pure scholarship. The first volume is completed by two essays on Liturgical questions, which during the last years of his life greatly occupied Mr. Conington's mind.

In making this collection I have availed myself of nearly everything in print or MS., with the exception of

a few early contributions to the *Edinburgh Review*. These, I believe, Mr. Conington would not himself have wished to reprint.

The second volume consists almost entirely of a prose translation of Virgil. I have reason to know that Professor Conington contemplated the publication of this translation as a supplement to his edition. Yet he has not left it in a state of entire completion; and it is clear from the rapidity with which the MS. is written, as well as from the minute alterations which have been made in the more studied passages, that this portion of his work suffers severely from posthumous publication.

In conclusion, I have only to add that in collecting and editing these Miscellanies, I have to the best of my ability performed what I regarded as a sacred duty to the memory of a friend from whom I received more than I find it possible to express.

Thanks must be rendered to the proprietors of the *Quarterly*, *Edinburgh*, *North British*, *Contemporary*, and other reviews, for their kind permission to reprint articles published by them.

CLIFTON: April 1872.

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MEMOIR.

THE LIVES of literary men do not often offer any considerable variety of incident, and that of Professor Conington was far from being an exception to this general rule. The habits of a student and a scholar were formed in him at an unusually early age; he showed at all times a marked distaste for any change in his way of life, or for adventure of any kind; and though during a great part of his life he took a keen interest in political and social questions, he never cared to mix with a larger world than that offered to him by his own circle of family and university friends. There is little, therefore, for a biographer to do but to attempt to convey to the readers of these miscellaneous writings something of the impression which the character of their author, by its simplicity and force, its gentleness and purity, made on all who had any opportunities of knowing him intimately.

The following particulars relating to his parentage and early boyhood have been communicated by his family:—

His father, the Rev. Richard Conington, was at first curate of the parish church of Boston, and afterwards incumbent of the Chapel-of-Ease in the same town. This incumbency he held till the year 1827, when he was presented to the Rectory of Fishtoft, a retired village in the neighbourhood. In 1823 he married his cousin, Jane Thirkill, and their eldest son John was born on August 10, 1825. John was from his birth a grave, quiet child, preferring books to play, and, as he grew older, he always chose the society of grown-up people in preference to that of children of his own age. He knew his letters when he was fourteen months old, and could read well for his own

amusement at three and a half. From his earliest years until he went to school he was his father's constant companion, and under his careful training was laid that solid foundation of reverence for the Word of God, which was the safeguard of his after-life amidst the snares of an intellectual career. Before he was six years old he was well acquainted with the historical parts of the Scriptures, and it was his constant habit to sleep with a Bible under his pillow, that he might read it as soon as he awoke in the morning. Books, and especially poetry, were ever his delight, and the greatest treat that could be given was to allow him to go into the study and choose a book for himself. When he was eight years old he would in this way amuse himself by comparing different editions of Virgil, and even before he was eight he repeated 1,000 lines of Virgil to his father. Even at that early age, in all his varied reading, the purity and refinement of his taste was remarkable. In 1834 he was sent to a small school at Silk Willoughby, where the Rev. J. Sanders became his tutor. The trial of leaving home for the first time was great, but his spirits were cheered by the promise of being allowed to go into the study when he liked. At the end of two years he was removed to the Beverley Grammar School, under the care of the Rev. Mr. Warren.

At Beverley he appears to have acquired the love of letter-writing, which he retained through his whole life, and which formed a marked peculiarity in his tastes in an age which is said to have almost forgotten the art. His early letters to his father are characterised by an ease and freedom from stiffness, which tell not only of the affectionateness of his temper but also of the command over expression to which he had already attained. The following is a fair specimen :—

March 12, 1838.

My dear Papa,

I received your kind letter about a fortnight ago. I am very glad to hear that Henry has obtained the half-holiday, and that Frank has begun Euclid *with a relish.* I am sorry to hear that you must postpone sending the books I requested, since the third volume of Valpy's Greek Testament is requisite to my at all understanding the meaning of the Epistle to the Hebrews, or cutting anything like a respectable figure in the class. I hope you will not think me idle when I tell you that the five librarians, in which number I am of

course included, have been reading by ourselves, independently of the subjects we prepare for Mr. Warren, some extracts from Theocritus. We have also agreed that every one of our number should devote an hour on Saturday afternoon to the reciting of a lecture on some art or science, the composition of some one or other of the librarians. None but us five know anything of the scheme, so that, between ourselves, you are the only one to whom these arcana have been communicated. My finances are at present reduced to a very low degree; but they have not been expended in any eatables, or anything like that. Two or three weeks ago, seeing a copy of Sotheby's Homer, I resolved to make myself master of it. It was quite new, uncut, unsullied; its publishing price is 3*l.* 12*s.*, this one cost me 1*l.* 15*s.* It is accompanied with seventy illustrations by Flaxman. As soon as Mr. Warren saw it, he told me that I had made a very excellent bargain, and soon after procured one himself, but I should hardly think at the same low price. There will then be an additional reason for sending me a parcel; but perhaps you will say you never take hints. I can only hope that this one will not be lost on you. In your next would you be so kind as to send me the last stanza of the parody on Roderick Dhu. Please remember that the books in request are three volumes of Valpy's Greek Testament and Mr. Gee's Virgil. The smallest donations will be thankfully received.

With love to all, I beg to subscribe myself

Your affectionate son,

J. CONINGTON.

P.S. A certain person, whose name I do not care to mention, told me to inform you that he was a good boy. I have written a poem of 104 lines on the Witch of Endor. I have shown it to Mr. Warren, who has as yet given no decision concerning it, so that I am on the eve of expectation.

It may gratify some youthful students of Latin to know that, in the postscript to another letter of about the same date, the future commentator of Virgil observes—'Memorandum: My head was tapped yesterday morning for not perfectly understanding a passage of Virgil. The accompanying words' (some customary formula which, it may be presumed, was not very complimentary) 'were however dispensed with.'

In 1838, at the age of thirteen, he was sent to school at Rugby,

then at the height of its fame under Dr. Arnold. He was placed in the house of Mr. Cotton (afterwards successively Head Master of Marlborough School, and Bishop of Calcutta), to whom he became strongly attached, and whom he regarded through life as one of his most valued friends. But the earlier part of his time at Rugby was not a very happy one. His near-sightedness unfitted him for the active amusements of a public school, and he probably never took part in a game of cricket or football except against his will. The old custom of the school by which all the boys, with hardly any exceptions, were compelled to join in certain football matches, or big-sides, was singularly irksome to him as a young boy, and never found much favour with him when he was older. Indeed, the first recollection of him which I myself retain, is that of seeing him wearily pacing to and fro inside the goal at the sixth form match. But, besides the continual feeling of being out of place which must haunt the mind of every schoolboy who cares for books and does not care for games, there were other and more positive causes of discomfort. The Rugby of those days still retained some of its primæval roughness, and though it may be hoped that even then all the worst forms of bullying had already disappeared, enough of the spirit of it remained to interfere seriously with the comfort of a sensitive boy, whose character and tastes were so much in advance of those around him. But these comparatively evil days were not of long duration, and might have left no deep impression on his memory, if it had not been for the gratitude with which he always remembered any kindness shown to him at this period by his older schoolfellows. Writing in 1859 to a young friend, he says:—

Another man there is who has just had his life written as an Indian hero—Hodson, of Hodson's Horse—but I have not seen the book yet, though I am anxious to do so. He was at Rugby years ago with me, though my senior, and for the last half year was head of Cotton's House, to which he had been sent to restore law and order—a sort of patron of mine, having considerable literary taste,

while he was a great athlete, so that I used to have the privilege of going to see him in his study and hearing him talk about eminent persons in and out of Rugby, and in return used occasionally to do him a copy of verses, both before and after I got into the sixth form, a piece of compliance which as you know I do not approve of now. I felt quite inclined to regard him as a hero then, and am proud to think that he proved himself so on a wider stage to the world at large.

Conington had never been a fag, having been placed on first coming to the school in the fifth form. By the end of 1839 he was already at the top of the twenty, and in after years he could still remember with pleasure 'the second Sunday in Advent 1839, when I got perhaps my greatest κῦδος at Rugby, being thanked for my examination by Price' (the present Professor of Political Economy at Oxford) 'before the form, as having beaten everybody by 1,300 marks.'

The work of the school had at no time (as may easily be believed) been too hard for him, and in the sixth form which he now entered, and in which, as in most public schools, the boys did not change places, he sometimes found the incentives to exertion insufficient to induce him to put any great strain on his faculties. But he was never idle, and at the times when he was least absorbed in the work of the form, he read largely for himself. Dr. Arnold's estimate of his powers may be gathered from the following passages in letters addressed to his father:—

Ambleside, June 20, 1840.

I spoke to him a little before he left Rugby, advising him rather to read during the holidays any good works in English literature, than to work at Latin or Greek. He has an immense advantage in his good scholarship, which will tell with double effect when his general powers of mind are more developed, and his knowledge becomes more extensive.

Fox How, Ambleside, December 26, 1840.

In his work I observe with great pleasure his remarkable memory and very good scholarship; his general knowledge is deficient, and his powers of thought or fancy are not in proportion to his memory; but this is the right order in which the faculties should develope

themselves, and I have no doubt that his compositions will regularly improve in point of matter, when his great facility and correctness of language will be an immense advantage to him.

Rugby, Nov. 2, 1841.

I have the greatest pleasure in telling you that your elder son's mind seems to me to have grown very considerably during the long holidays, and I find a great improvement in the matter of his compositions, which used to be unequal to the exceeding goodness of his scholarship.

One cannot help feeling that in these remarks due allowance is hardly made for the immaturity of a very young pupil. But Dr. Arnold's own earnestness and intensity of purpose led him to expect even from the very young a high degree of intellectual as well as moral excellence; and there can be no doubt that the powerful influence for good which he exercised over the minds of the boys of his sixth form was owing in great measure to the severe justice of his criticisms, and to the high standard by which he judged their work and their conduct. It is probable that, in the case of Conington, the strong contrast between the natural boyishness of his thoughts and the extraordinary command over language which he sometimes displayed, may have occasionally led the masters of the school to under-estimate the force and originality of his reasoning powers and of his imagination. If it were so, his schoolfellows judged differently. To us his conversation was delightful, and was certainly as instructive as it was entertaining. In the long summer walks, which then as now were one of the chief pleasures of Rugby boys, he would sometimes, if we pressed him to do so, awaken our admiration with some marvellous display of his powers of memory, repeating to us, for instance, our own unsuccessful and forgotten prize poems. But he would much oftener interest us in a discussion relating, it might be, to some incident of our school life, or to some question of literary or poetical criticism, or perhaps to matters of graver import; and to these discussions his genial wit and pleasant fancies, and above all his varied

stores of knowledge, which to us seemed inexhaustible, gave a perpetual charm.

One unfortunate event in his school history it may be proper to mention here, as it was not without influence on the formation of his character. He may be allowed to tell the story as he told it to his father at the time:—

Rugby, Nov. 8, 1841.

You have, I suppose, ere this received a letter from Dr. Arnold, informing you of my recent degradation. I was doubtful at first whether you would expect to hear from me before you wrote yourself, but on consideration I thought you would be better pleased if I wrote forthwith, without waiting to hear from you. The facts of the case are these. Friday being the 5th of November, preparations were made as usual for a display of fireworks. Mr. Cotton happened to find a parcel containing the greater part of the purchases, which, to use his own expression, he confiscated as contraband goods. However, as there were still a few left, they were discharged forthwith, partly in the open air, and partly in the passage. Mr. Cotton, instead of coming out himself, which would have been the natural course to pursue, sent for me, as being the then head of the house (a title of ostensible responsibility, though in reality it confers no actual power), and told me to send up those who had discharged the fireworks in the passage. I accordingly represented the matter to the rest, and the consequence was that two out of the fifth form (over whom we have no power, and consequently could only *recommend* them to surrender themselves) gave themselves up as having taken a part in the affair. I was then sent for again, and desired to ask a number of boys, whom he named, if they were guilty or not guilty. The question having been put, three out of the number were sent up. On the next morning we (*i.e.* the whole sixth form in our house, being five in number, —— having been absent that evening) were unexpectedly charged by the Doctor for not having stopped the fireworks as they were going on. Having nothing to say in exculpation of ourselves, sentence was pronounced upon me, to take my place below —— (who, as I told, was not implicated, owing to absence), and moreover a severe punishment was threatened to myself and the rest, which was to be considered of. This evening we were accordingly desired to translate Cicero de Republicâ, lib. ii. as a penalty.

I do not wish to say anything in self-vindication, but merely to

give a statement of facts which may speak for themselves. I am at a loss to think how you will regard the part I took in this unpleasant affair. I took care of course not to participate in the discharge of fireworks myself, and also not to be a looker-on, lest my presence might be interpreted into countenancing the proceeding . . . . I do not think that if you had been informed of my conduct without reference to punishment, you would have been very seriously displeased; so I cannot believe that the magnitude of the punishment will aggravate the offence in your eyes, as the case would have been different had we known the penalty, and done the thing (I should say, left it undone) knowing what we should incur by so doing.

The loss of a few places in the sixth form was not in itself a matter of any great consequence, and it speaks well for the discipline of the school that this should have been considered so severe a punishment. It must be remembered that great importance was attached by Dr. Arnold to the position and duties of the Præpostors, upon whom he relied to no inconsiderable extent for the discipline and good management of the school. While, therefore, he was always ready to support their authority to the utmost, he regarded any remissness in the discharge of their duties as a matter for the very gravest reprehension. In the present case, however, after a little time had passed, he intimated to Conington that he no longer took so severe a view of the matter as he had done at first. The prevailing opinion in the school was that Conington had been treated with some harshness, but that it was on the whole a fortunate thing for him to be relieved from the irksome responsibilities attaching to the position of head boy in his boarding-house. He himself always maintained that more had been expected from him than was possible under the circumstances, and that the punishment inflicted on him was excessive. But he was too generous to allow this feeling to interfere for one moment with the sentiments of veneration and affection with which he regarded the 'Doctor;' and it was always a great pleasure to him to remember that, before Dr. Arnold's death, which took place in the following midsummer, he had been

completely restored to the confidence and favour of one to whose teaching he owed so much. It is right to add, that if the lesson was a rough, and to a great extent, an undeserved one, it was certainly not lost upon him; for few men in later life would have been less likely to show weakness or irresoluteness in the presence of any public duty.

His father had originally intended that he should go to Cambridge, being partly influenced by dislike to the Tractarian movement, which seemed at that time to be dominant at Oxford. But the son's own prepossessions were strongly in favour of Oxford, and his wishes found a warm advocate in Dr. Tait, who urged with great justice that, as he had confessedly no taste for mathematics, if he should go to Cambridge he would in all probability devote himself exclusively to Greek and Latin scholarship; whereas at Oxford, the reading of Aristotle and of Moral Philosophy would form the best supplement to the study of language, and would prevent it from degenerating into mere verbal criticism. A letter of his own to his father, written while this question, to him so important, was still unsettled, will show how seriously he reflected on it himself, and how far he was from wishing to have it decided on the simple ground of his own personal preference. His comparison between the courses of study at the two Universities, in which he appears to give the palm to Cambridge, is remarkable for its clearness of insight and breadth of view, while it shows all the 'courage of criticism' which is seldom wanting in young men brought up under the modern system of education. It must be remembered, however, that in the last thirty years both Oxford and Cambridge have undergone great changes, and that the points of contrast which were so prominent in 1843 have been since to a considerable extent softened down.

Rugby, May 19, 1843.

. . . . I have been led from attentive observation lately to look upon the two rival systems of Oxford and Cambridge as being neither of them perfect in themselves, from their being each con-

fined to one part of education. Cambridge, I should say, from its verbal criticism and philological research, as well as its mathematical studies, imparts a system of education, valuable not so much for itself, as for the excellent discipline which prepares the mind to pass from the investigation of abstract intellectual truth to the contemplation of moral subjects. Oxford, on the contrary, seeks without any such medium to arrive at the higher ground at once, without passing through the lower, leading the mind, before it has been sufficiently disciplined, to investigate the highest and most sacred subjects at once. Cambridge men too often view the intellectual exercise as sufficient in itself, instead of as a preparation for higher things; Oxford men, without any such preparation, which they affect to despise, proceed to speculate on great moral questions before they have first practised themselves with lower and less dangerous studies. And this, I look upon it, is the cause of the theological novelties at Oxford—men apply to the most sacred things powers which ought first to have been disciplined by purely intellectual exercise. The one, if I may so express myself, raise a scaffolding, and too often rest contented with that; the other endeavour to build the house either with no scaffolding at all, or at least a very slight one—and a most unsubstantial structure it generally proves. The fault of Cambridge, you see, is not the fault of the system, but its abuse; in Oxford, the plan seems to me radically wrong, and consequently, if followed out to the full, cannot do much good. Cambridge appears to have seen that the province of a university is not to give a complete education, but to furnish the mind with rules drawn from lower subjects to be applied in after life to higher; Oxford wishes to give a complete education, and by attempting too much, does the whole very imperfectly.

As might have been expected, his strongly-felt wishes (rather perhaps than his carefully-balanced reasons) were allowed by his father to prevail, and he matriculated at University College, Oxford, on June 30, 1843. But he did not commence residence at that College. In midsummer of the same year he offered himself as a candidate for a demyship at Magdalen, and was successful. The demyships at that time were filled up by nomination, there being always, however, an examination of a more or less competitive character. It was understood that the venerable President of the College, Dr. Martin Routh,

made it a rule never to pass over any young man of eminent merit; and in this instance he gave his first nomination to the Rugby candidate, unsupported as he was by any private interest or influential recommendation. Dr. Routh's advanced age at this time prevented him from seeing much of the undergraduate members of his College, or from exercising any important influence on the course of their education. Conington was much impressed by his kindness and old-world courtesy on all occasions when he had to call on him officially; and it would seem that the old man had no difficulty in discerning the true character of his visitor; for instead of exhortations to steadiness of conduct, or encouragement to diligent study, he would give him shrewd lessons of worldly wisdom, and hints as to the best way of succeeding in life.

Conington now finally quitted Rugby, where he had been elected an Exhibitioner for three consecutive years, and commenced residence at Oxford in the October term. In the following Lent he succeeded in carrying off both the Hertford and Ireland scholarships, which are looked upon as the highest classical distinctions attainable by any undergraduate in the University. It was the custom then, much more than it is at present, for young men to read with private tutors; and soon after coming up to Oxford he had the good fortune to become the private pupil of a justly eminent scholar, the Rev. W. Linwood, of Christ Church; and no doubt his early success in these two examinations is in great measure to be attributed to the good use he made of this advantage. He had been unusually anxious about the result; and, conscious that he would not win without a great effort, he had taxed his strength of mind and body to the utmost in order to secure his victory. It is not, therefore, very surprising to find that, when the contest was over, his energies somewhat flagged so far as his university work was concerned. The course of reading required for the final examination was far from enough to find him occupation for the whole of his time. The Greek

and Latin scholarship, which at that time was an essential requisite for a first class, was already at his command in an abundant measure. For history he never had any special predilection, and he used often to say regretfully that he considered himself to be without any natural aptitude for that study. But his gift for reading rapidly, and remembering accurately after the most cursory perusal, made it very easy for him to acquire as much knowledge of ancient history as he needed for the purposes of the schools. In Moral Philosophy, which formed the third, and perhaps even then the most important subject of the examination, he took a livelier interest. His love for the discussion of political and moral questions had here full scope; and under the skilful training of another excellent tutor, the Rev. C. P. Chretien, of Oriel, he soon became a fair Aristotelian. Still, neither Plato nor Aristotle were ever genuine favourites with him; in later years he would refuse to see any merit, sometimes indeed to find any sense, in the Metaphysics of Aristotle; and he used steadily to maintain that the study of ancient philosophy was by no means a necessary, and perhaps not even a desirable, preparation for the pursuits of a scholar.

Before offering himself for his final examination, he quitted Magdalen, having been elected in March 1846 to a scholarship at University, thus returning to the college at which he had been originally matriculated. He took this step, because, having already determined not to take holy orders, he found that there was only a very remote prospect of succession to a lay fellowship at Magdalen. 'I shall never fail,' he wrote, 'to speak of the authorities there as having been very kind to me personally, and as having made my residence there as comfortable as they could; and it is a satisfaction to me to think that in leaving them I acted with their entire concurrence.' He obtained his first class in December 1846, and his fellowship at University fourteen months later, in February 1848.

In competing for the University Prize Poems and Prize

Essays he was less immediately fortunate than he had been in the examinations for the University Scholarships. The Newdegate Prize for English Verse he never obtained at all, and the Prize for Latin Verse not till 1847, after two unsuccessful efforts. The subject set for the poem in that year was 'Turris Londinensis,' and, perhaps owing to its somewhat trite character, it failed to interest him seriously. There is consequently a certain want of life about his composition, which prevents it, notwithstanding its correctness, from being a very favourable specimen of his powers of Latin versification. He regarded it himself in this light, and thought it not so good as some of his own unsuccessful poems, while with his usual candour he placed it much below the brilliant 'Numa Pompilius' of his friend, Mr. Goldwin Smith, which he always looked on as one of the very best among recent pieces of Latin verse. Something of the same ill fortune attended him with regard to the English and Latin Essays—the prizes for which he obtained in the years 1848 and 1849, and in each case on his first attempt. But the subjects of these essays, 'The Respective Effects of the Fine Arts and Mechanical Skill on National Character,' and 'Quænam fuerit Platonis idea in republicâ suâ conscribendâ?' were neither of them exactly suited to him, and did not excite in his mind that sort of enthusiasm without which he found it difficult to put forth his full powers. Thus his essays, though they do not fall below, do not rise very much above the standard of merit usually found in compositions of this kind.

During his undergraduate career, and for two or three years after taking his degree, he took an active part in the discussions of the Union Society, of which he was secretary in 1845, president in 1846, and librarian in 1847. He had not in those days as yet abandoned the ambitious desire—a desire which is probably never wholly absent from the mind of any young Englishman—of entering some day on public life; and he naturally regarded the Union as the best available school of

preparation for such a career. The debates of that society, though never at any time intermitted, have not always been equally popular with the undergraduate members of the university. In Conington's time they were in great favour, and it was quite the fashion to attend them. The 'House,' always crowded, was often stormy and uproarious, and, not unfrequently, it required some tact and management to get a hearing from it at all. It had strong Tory convictions, which it did not like to have contradicted; it exhibited an intolerance of bores which cannot be too strongly commended to the imitation of other popular assemblies; and altogether it presented as good a practising ground for mimic political warfare as a young orator could desire. Conington had some personal difficulties to contend against, among which his near sight, and an occasional hesitation in speaking, were not the least. But, in spite of them, he soon established for himself a good position with his audience; and obtained as much control over them as any of his contemporaries. There was sense and sound reasoning even in his most unprepared speeches; and he always, in speaking no less than in writing, had at his command a copious supply of polished language. His delivery was never free from embarrassment; but, notwithstanding this, there was something fine and classical in his way of speaking. Unlike some orators of much greater note, he finished every sentence which he began; and, in his speeches, just as in his conversation, or in his most careless and hastily written letters, it would have been hard to find an ungrammatical turn of expression, or a phrase of questionable English.

Some of the subjects which were uppermost in his mind during this period are referred to in the following extracts from letters to his father and mother:—

Magd. Coll., November 7, 1844.

The favourite passage of Arnold, I suppose, is Ἐχθίστη ὀδύνη πολλὰ φρονέοντα μηδένος κρατέειν, which occurs several times in the course of his correspondence. It may mean either that it is

a most grievous curse for a man, who sees much truth, to influence no one, or (instead of the last four words) to realise nothing. Either way the sense is the same—the question is whether μηδένος refers to a person or a thing. Apart from verbal points, the observation is most true, and most painful, and must come home to every one who thinks at all.

Magd. Coll., April 30, 1845.

I scarcely know how the Maynooth question is regarded among us. The opinion of the generality of the undergraduates is, as you may imagine, not worth having, and even if it were, it would still be a difficult matter to test it. In February I brought forward a motion against the grant at the Union, which I carried after an animated debate by about three to two, in a house of about forty members. At present, however, we have a debate pending, which has already continued a fortnight—'That Sir Robert Peel's Government has forfeited the confidence of the country,' and the question of Maynooth of course enters very largely into it. There have been several good speeches both from the friends and the enemies of the grant; nor can I tell from the feeling expressed which way the general opinion really is. The attendance is much larger, averaging, I believe, between 200 and 300 each night. Even after the division has taken place, it will be hard to tell the feelings of the men on this particular subject, as many who would oppose the Government thereon, will vote for them on a broad general question, myself among the number.

Magd. Coll., May 3, 1845.

The question now before the Union is not the grant to Maynooth, which, as I told you, was discussed last term under my auspices, but the confidence of the country in Sir Robert Peel's Government, and this is what I mean to affirm by my vote, as I suppose you would do yourself. My objections to the Maynooth grant continue in full force, and had I had a seat in the House of Commons I should have certainly voted against it, though I knew that my vote would endanger Peel's continuance in office; but as to objecting to his continuance in office, when that is the question to which you must say aye or no, I should be one of the last persons in the world to do so. I do not agree with many of his opinions, but I respect him nevertheless. A statesman, according to my view, ought to make right his exclusive standard of action; but the man who makes expediency his exclusive standard—expediency, I mean, in the wide

sense of the term—is, in my opinion, second best. The generality of statesmen are guided by expediency in a very low sense—the expediency of party, not the expediency of the nation. I do not withdraw my confidence from Sir Robert Peel, simply because I know no one better to whom to give it. You would not trust the Whigs. Ward's motion for robbing the Irish Church to pay Maynooth was supported by Lord J. Russell. The agriculturists and old Tories could never raise an administration. Young England, even were it practical enough, is divided against itself, and I should hardly think you would wish to see Cobden First Lord of the Treasury, with Roebuck for a Lord Chancellor. In Gladstone, I had real confidence, previous to the change of his opinions on the Maynooth grant. I could scarcely understand his speech in the papers, so I got the published copy, and cannot call it in any way satisfactory, so that I am constrained to own that there is no help in him. Now the country must have confidence in some one, and there being no other conceivable administration in which it could so confide, I argue that its confidence must still be possessed by Peel.

Oxford: The Union, February 17, 1846.

I glance over the debates each day, just to keep up with the news; but I do not learn enough to enable me to form an opinion. Peel's speech last night seems a good one, especially the first part, where he speaks of the accusation of having broken up his party. What will the state of parties be in ten years' time? It passes my power of guessing; in fact, I should doubt whether anyone now living could tell. That the Free Traders will split up into parties on different questions, I suppose there can be no doubt. Partisanship is too deeply engrafted in the heart of man to be rooted up by the vicissitudes of a Corn Law battle.

Magd. Coll., February 21, 1846.

I can tell you very little about Pusey's sermon, as I did not hear, and have not read it. It excited great expectation, and there was a tremendous crowd to hear it, as the newspaper accounts will doubtless have informed you. The first sentence was, I should think, well calculated to work up the attention of all to the highest pitch, opening with a direct mention of the last occasion on which he filled the University pulpit. As a point of controversy, it does not seem to have been much talked of, as he appears not to have committed himself doctrinally, so as to be liable to University penal-

ties. Men spoke of it, however, in the spirit of those who had witnessed a great historical event, and the general feeling was certainly in favour of the preacher.

Next in general interest to Pusey's sermon, was one the next Sunday from Stanley, who you know is select preacher, and then delivered the first of a course on the distinctive characters of the Apostles Peter, Paul, and John. It was very eloquent and imaginative, and, as I think, very good, though many Oxford men attacked it as being the very essence of rationalism, fixing mainly on two points: first, his plan of recognising the distinct *human* characters of the Apostles as remaining visible amid their common inspiration; secondly, one of the practical inferences which he drew from such a recognition, that good may present itself under different forms of character and shades of opinion within the Church. I do not undertake to subscribe to every expression he used, but generally I thought, so far from being rationalistic, it furnished the true means of meeting rationalism—taking a middle line between rationalism on the one hand, and superstition on the other. I am sure it is a good thing to have theology presented to the mind of Oxford in other than a controversial aspect; it may, if followed up, do much to allay the present unwholesome excitement on such matters, and besides has a work of its own, as the explanation or exegesis of Scripture is much neglected here, no one being more behindhand in it generally than practised disputants.

Magd. Coll., March 17, 1846.

About great men, I am inclined on the whole to agree with what you say about Cobden. A very great man I should scarcely call him, as that is a name which you would hardly give to one or two in a century; but a great man I think he must be, whether you sympathise with his Free Trade schemes or no. His speech on the Corn Law Debate showed his greatness; there was throughout a calmness and self-possession, a consciousness of power, and a disposition, I should hope, to use it with moderation and firmness which told on me considerably.

Oxford: The Union, May 6, 1846.

I cannot enter into the Corn Law question, because as a matter of fact I do not understand it. What you say about the burdens pressing almost exclusively on the landed proprietor would be a strong argument, if it were clearly made out; but I have certainly seen counter-statements in the *Times* to prove that a small trades-

man is much more burdened than a farmer. So between statement and counter-statement I really do not know what to think. I merely say on general grounds that the rise of a new power ought always to be recognised, and that the same reason which led to the ennobling of the landed proprietor in the first instance now points out that their honours ought to be shared with a new claimant. I have never heard anything to shake me in this, if I had I should be glad to give it up. The fact is that neither party will bear analysing in point of worth; but an aristocracy of worth you cannot have, so you must fall back upon some principle like that of property or power of commanding labour.

The summer preceding his election to his fellowship he spent at Dresden with his friends, Mr. Goldwin Smith and Mr. Philpot. This was the only visit he ever paid to the Continent, and though he retained some pleasant recollections of it he never ventured on another. The discomforts and small annoyances of foreign travel were so repugnant to him, that he felt they were but poorly compensated by the wider opportunities of observing men and things. His truly English preference for home to a strange country, combined with the tendency to attach himself to any place even after a very short residence in it, find a not unpleasing expression in a letter written to his mother shortly before leaving Dresden:—

Dresden, September 21, 1847.

I am sorry that Papa and Frank should have been forced to part company, though I have no doubt it was better that it should be so. The latter appears to be having a regular outing, and will probably have seen more during his three weeks than I shall be able to give an account of when my eight have come to an end. *N'importe*, it is my way, and in my way I hope I have picked up something in consequence of leaving England; indeed it would be a pity if it were not so, as it is really the only thing to my mind which can justify going abroad at all, considering the superiority in almost every way of what one leaves behind. Nevertheless, though heartily glad to be at home again, I shall be sorry, yes certainly sorry, to leave Dresden, putting the annoyance of moving out of the question. Six weeks do a great deal to attach one to a place, and I shall carry

with me many pleasant memories of persons and things which I do not like to think that I am not likely to see again. And yet, whether I shall see the persons or things again is more than doubtful; in the little amount of travel which I shall probably accomplish one year with another there will hardly be time to visit the same place a second time. And this strikes upon me as rather a melancholy thought. Well, I suppose it must be so in life over and over again, and I will not indulge in myself a feeling which I should snub as sentimental in J——.

Before quitting the Continent he did not fail to visit Leipsic, in order to see Godfrey Hermann, the veteran chief of Greek Philology. Hermann received him very cordially, and talked freely with him on literary subjects. But the visit, embarrassed as it was by difficulties of language (they had to talk in Latin, and each of course pronounced it after the manner of his own country), did not lead to any further intercourse or correspondence.

The years which elapsed between his election to his Fellowship and his appointment to the Professorship of Latin were the most unsettled of his life; and although the restless activity of his mind prevented them from being fruitless, there was a want of definite purpose in his efforts at this time which was a cause of some regret to him afterwards. The Oxford institutions of that day offered but few inducements to a clergyman, and none whatever to a layman, to devote himself to the study of philology, or indeed to any study at all. There seemed to be no 'carrière ouverte aux talents,' and there were certainly very few University offices to which a layman could look forward as affording extended opportunities of usefulness, or a just reward for services already rendered. There was as yet no Professorship of Latin at all, and the Regius Professorship of Greek (then held by Dr. Gaisford, the Dean of Christ Church) still retained its ancient endowment of 40*l.* a year. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising to find that Conington determined (though not without much anxious deliberation) to abandon his favourite studies and his Oxford life, and to try his

fortune in a more active profession. He accordingly applied for and obtained the Eldon Law Scholarship, which is awarded by its trustees to the candidate whose University distinctions have in their judgment established the best claim to it. The Eldon Scholar is required to keep his terms regularly at one of the Inns of Court, and, during his tenure of the Scholarship, is considered bound in honour to be a *bonâ fide* student of the law. In compliance with these regulations Conington gave up residence at Oxford in Michaelmas 1849, and, establishing himself in London, began to read in chambers, and for some time used his best endeavours to transfer his affections from the Greek poets to jurisprudence. Fortunately the experiment proved a complete failure before too much time was wasted on it. He found that he disliked, or more properly detested, the work he had to do in a lawyer's chambers; and such ambition as he had was too fitful and uncertain to be maintained in permanent activity by the far-off prospects of great success which form the day-dreams of many a young lawyer. What he really longed for was some recognised and permanent position, of which the duties might be congenial to him, and in which he could conscientiously feel himself of use. His wishes were certainly not immoderate in their range, but on the other hand he was somewhat impatient for their immediate fulfilment. To a man in such a temper the hope of becoming in twenty years' time an eminent leader at the chancery bar had very little charm; and the aimlessness of an Oxford life might well seem better than the faint chance of obtaining at a remote period what after all he did not very much care for. But, even more perhaps than by the change in his occupations, or the uncertainty of his prospects, he was rendered uncomfortable by the loss of intimate companionship with his friends. His nature was so affectionate and expansive that the comparative isolation, in which young men from the Universities often find themselves when they first enter on a London life, seemed chilling and even insupportable to him, when

contrasted with the easy ways of society at Oxford, where men who wish to meet without inconvenience or interruption to the regular course of their occupations can do so almost daily, in the college halls or common rooms, in country walks, or in transacting the public business of the University. After six months' trial of the law, during which he became very dissatisfied with himself, and more or less dissatisfied with everything about him, he wisely gave up a useless and irritating struggle against the natural bent of his genius; and resigning the Eldon Scholarship, he returned, with a sense of extreme relief and thankfulness, to the quiet of his rooms in University College.

During his stay in London he formed a connection with the *Morning Chronicle*, and became for a time a regular contributor to that journal. But, notwithstanding all his fluency in writing, it may be doubtful whether he would ever have developed the somewhat peculiar talent which is required for the daily production of first-rate leading articles. He never could write his best except when he wrote from strong conviction, or, at least, when he wrote upon matters which interested him deeply, and which had been present to his mind long enough for him to know what attitude he could conscientiously take up with regard to them. But the journalist has sometimes to write at a few hours' notice on a subject with which, to say the least, he is only superficially acquainted, and has to advocate a view which is indicated to him in advance by party or editorial exigencies, and which may not be the same as that which the facts, when he begins to examine them, would of themselves have suggested to his mind. These difficulties were keenly felt by Conington, and when it fell to his lot to do one of the rough-and-ready pieces of work which are necessary to the successful conducting of a newspaper, there was a sort of timidity in the execution of his task, a conscientious balancing of the two sides of the question, and a hesitation in pressing his point, which was very unlike the vigorous way in which he could lay about him when writing upon questions with regard to which his mind

was made up. The articles in the *Morning Chronicle* of 1849–50 which relate to University Reform, a topic then attracting much attention in the Liberal press, are chiefly from his hand; and these certainly will not be found to exhibit any indecision of purpose or any want of incisive expression.

Before he went to London he had already (in 1848) edited the Agamemnon of Æschylus, with English notes, and an interleaved translation into English verse. With this, his first effort, both as a translator and editor of a classic author, he was never thoroughly satisfied, even at the time of its publication; and later, when he had to consider the advisability of republishing it, he determined not to do so, saying that he should have to rewrite the whole commentary and to suppress the translation altogether. Of the translation he probably judged too hardly, for though as a whole it is inharmonious, and is blemished here and there with harsh and even infelicitous renderings, it is not wanting in vigour nor in poetic feeling, while it hardly needs to be said that it is scholarlike and accurate. After his return to Oxford Æschylus continued to be his favourite. He knew the whole of the seven plays by heart, and lavished time and thought upon the criticism and explanation of their text. His 'Choephoroe' appeared in 1857, and is one of the best editions of that play in existence, contributing only a little, it is true, to the settlement of the text, but very much to its right interpretation. He had also collected the materials (chiefly, however, storing them in his memory) for a similar edition of the 'Supplices.' But he was prevented from carrying out this design, in the first instance, by his undertaking in conjunction with Mr. Goldwin Smith to edit Virgil, and afterwards by his appointment to the chair of Latin. From a conscientious motive, which it is difficult not to think overstrained, he was unwilling after he became Professor of Latin to devote any considerable portion of his time to Greek, and when pressed, as he often was, to prepare his edition of the 'Supplices' for publication, he would always say that he must let

it wait until he had done what he could with Latin. The edition of Virgil was begun in 1852, and the first volume, containing the Eclogues and Georgics, was published in 1858. The greater part of the work had to be done alone, as Mr. Goldwin Smith, on becoming secretary to the Oxford University Commission, was obliged to retire from the joint editorship. The transition from the absorbing study of Æschylus to that of Virgil was an abrupt one, as it would be difficult to find two poets whose merits and imperfections are more absolutely unlike. Thus, when he began working on Virgil he was not indisposed to sympathise with much of the depreciatory criticism of which that poet has been the object during the present century. Traces of this want of admiration are by no means unfrequent in his earlier notes, though even these are much softened down from what they were in their first rough drafts. But to all lovers of Virgil it is pleasant to see how the beauties of the poet, though they grew upon him only gradually, proved irresistible in the end; and if he was guilty, when comparatively a beginner, of finding a certain clumsiness in the construction of the first Eclogue, he made ample amends by the genuine and hearty admiration which he afterwards bestowed upon other writings of its author. The lecture 'On the style of Lucretius and Catullus as compared with that of the poets of the Augustan age,' which is printed in this volume, expresses the judgment at which he finally arrived, and contains some fine criticism of the minuter details of Virgil's consummate art, as well as an earnest vindication of his claim to genuine originality.

The election to the Professorship of Latin took place in 1854. The Chair was a new one in the University, having just been founded by Corpus Christi College to carry out a provision in the statutes of their founder, which had been allowed to fall into abeyance during the long torpor which had crept over the professorial system in Oxford. As Conington was opposed by more than one distinguished competitor, whose merits he most

fully recognised, and as he was himself better known as a Greek than as a Latin scholar, he did not expect a favourable result with any great confidence, and his anxiety was in proportion to his uncertainty. His success gave him all the external advantages that he desired in life; and, if in the few preceding years his mind had been sometimes disturbed by an under-current of restlessness and discontent, these feelings passed away at once and for ever.

But this was not the only change that his friends observed in him at this time. During the Long Vacation, which intervened between his election to the Professorship and his entrance upon the discharge of its duties, he passed through a mental conflict which left a deep and permanent impression upon his character, and which, even in this brief memoir, it would be inconsistent with truthfulness to leave unmentioned. The liveliness and sincerity of the religious impressions of his childhood have been already noticed; and these impressions had at no subsequent time faded from his mind. At Rugby they had grown with his growth, and had been widened as well as deepened by the teaching and the example of Dr. Arnold, to whom the discharge of every duty, however secular, seemed a direct religious service, and who had the gift of communicating something of this sacred earnestness to those immediately around him. At Oxford, in a larger world, Conington was exposed, as his father had anticipated, to influences of a more varied and unsettling kind. It would have been strange if, with his powers of sympathy, and with his unfeigned reverence for every manifestation of intellectual or moral greatness, he could have remained wholly unaffected by either of the two tendencies of thought which divided the Oxford of his day between them, although neither of them were in unison with the early teachings of his home, or perhaps with his own most deeply-rooted convictions. As an undergraduate he became a disciple, though by no means an advanced one, of the Oxford high church theology, combining it, as many others have done, with a sort of political radicalism,

which with him was never very extreme, though it sufficed to obtain for him, at least with the young Tories of the Union, the reputation of being a very dangerous and revolutionary character. But, living as he did in a society which might have taken for its adage the words of Ecclesiastes, *Mundum tradidit disputationi eorum*, and which assuredly believed that animated conversational discussions are as effectual for the discovery of truth as they unquestionably are for the sharpening of the wit, he gradually formed the habit of submitting the varying opinions of men on religious questions, as on all other subjects of human interest, to a keen intellectual criticism; and, though it is likely that he never adopted any conclusions of a rationalistic kind, he acquired a distaste for all dogmatic definiteness, and a warm sympathy with the spirit of free enquiry in theology. But at the time at which he had now arrived, a change passed over the tenor of his thoughts in relation to these subjects—a change, which was as sudden as it was complete and enduring. As he described it himself, a sense of the reality of eternal things was instantaneously borne in upon him, while he was engaged in one of his ordinary occupations. For some weeks his mind was agitated and unstrung by this overwhelming consciousness of the immediate presence of the terrors of the unseen world. He was unable to take any interest in, or even to give any sustained attention to, any subject not directly affecting the momentous questions which engaged his thoughts. He would not even read the New Testament in Greek, apparently because the very language suggested associations which for the time had become repugnant to him. When he emerged from this state of depression, it was with the fixed determination to make the obligations of religion, as he had learned them in his childhood, the sole governing principle of his life; and to this determination he consistently adhered. It was some little time before his mind completely recovered its calmness and energy, and before a settled and cheerful piety replaced the gloom which had for a while overshadowed him.

There is a perfect love which casts out fear; but it is not in every saintly life that this perfection is realised, and perhaps of Conington it may be true to say that his mind was at all times too prone to dwell on the awfulness of eternity, and not ready enough to take comfort in the thought of eternal love. Perhaps, also, he never again allowed himself the same range of sympathy with all matters of human concern in which he had previously indulged. In after years he used not to advert to the circumstances of the change that had taken place in him; at the time he spoke of it to his intimate friends—unreservedly, it is true, but in the simplest language, and without any unnecessary dwelling on details. It cannot be wrong to record that he counted among his many friends some to whom that which had befallen him was unintelligible, except when regarded as the passing weakness of an overworked brain, and to whom it was as unwelcome as it was unintelligible. But the deep affectionateness and sincerity of his character prevented any one of his friendships from being broken, or even strained by such a divergence of sentiment; he was, in fact, incapable of losing a friend whom he had once made. And if his interests were somewhat narrowed, they became even more intense; nor were they in any manner limited to sacred subjects. His enjoyment of philology, of poetical criticism, and of literature became keener than ever; and, if he cared less than formerly for social and political questions, he took an eager and prominent part in the ever-recurring discussions relating to the studies and the reform of the University.

The general character of his professorial teaching is described by anticipation in his inaugural lecture. 'The way,' he says, 'to study Latin literature is to study the authors who gave it its characters; the way to study those authors is to study them individually in their individual works, and to study each work as far as may be in its minutest details. . . . . The peculiar training which is sought from the study of literature is only to be obtained, in anything like its true fulness, by attending not

merely to each paragraph or each sentence, but to each word, not merely to the general force of an expression, but to the various constituents which make up the effect produced by it on a thoroughly intelligent reader.' He was not insensible to the advantages to be derived by a scholar from a widely extended, and therefore a necessarily rapid, perusal of ancient writers, in such a manner as to fill the mind almost unconsciously with the spirit of antiquity. But he felt strongly that the greatest danger of a young student is to pass too lightly over what he reads, and to rest content with ascertaining the general meaning of a passage, without stopping to examine closely those fine shades of expression which are often the source of all its force and beauty. The foreign literature of modern times bears so great a resemblance to our own, and is the work of minds moulded by influences so entirely the same as those to which we are ourselves subject, that the meaning of each sentence is apprehended with the utmost fulness, as soon as it is apprehended at all, by any intelligent person having even a moderate acquaintance with the language he is reading; and to consider each line minutely, in the hope of extracting more from it, would be as great a waste of labour as to apply a similar process to a paragraph in the *Times*. But in the case of works which have come down to us in a dead language, and from a world of which the civilisation has long since passed away, it requires an unusual familiarity with ancient forms of thought to be sure that in a hasty reading some considerable part of the impression which the author intended to convey has not escaped us altogether. And if this be true to a certain extent of all ancient literature, it is emphatically true of works like those of the tragic poets in Greek, or of Virgil in Latin, which are composed in a style of which a peculiar and essentially un-modern subtlety is the chief characteristic. In the preface to the 'Choephoroe,' Conington had insisted strongly on the necessity of examining Æschylus 'line by line and word by word;' and the main object that he proposed to himself in his lectures was to

promote the study of Latin in the same spirit of elaborate and even microscopic enquiry. It was in accordance with this general purpose that in a course of lectures he never made his class travel over very much ground; he aimed rather at teaching them how to read a little aright, than how to read much or easily. This limitation in the scope of his lessons did not make them less interesting to the best scholars in his audience, but it certainly rendered them less attractive to the generality of students. Nor was he unconscious of the inartistic and confused effect produced by massing together in one discourse a great number of minutiæ of interpretation, with but rare opportunities of relieving their monotony by grouping them with reference to some wider and more generally important principle. But to this disadvantage he deliberately submitted himself, believing it to be inseparable from the method which he regarded as the only right one. For the more public and formal lectures required by the statute of his Chair, he either chose some subject connected with Latin literature, and capable of a treatment more satisfactory to his sense of artistic completeness, or else he read a portion of the prose translation of Virgil, which is placed in the second volume of this collection. His lessons on Latin Verse Composition are thus characterised by Mr. Nettleship:—

Mr. Conington's lectures on Latin verse deserve, I think, some special notice on account of the thoroughness of their method. He always began with an analysis of the piece of English set, comparing it sentence by sentence with any passages of the Latin classics which occurred to him as similar either in spirit or expression, and taking especial care to point out anything modern or unclassical, and to show the nearest approximation to it which was likely to have occurred to a Roman poet. The remainder of the hour he took up with reading out and criticising a selection of the best pieces sent in by the pupils, and a dictation of his own translation. The last part of the lecture, though dry, was yet serviceable in thoroughly sifting the piece and giving the students an idea of the manifold possibilities of Latin expression; the pre-eminently original and suggestive portion, however, if I may be allowed to judge by my

own experience, was the preliminary analysis. To a student fresh from school, and perhaps from a comparatively conventional system of correction, it was a new light to have set before him, by one whose memory was stored with reminiscences of the best Latin and English literature, and who touched all poetry with an innate tact and sense of its meaning, a detailed comparison between modern and ancient poetical feeling and modes of utterance. Just as the best teachers of ancient philosophy are careful to exhibit a historical or comparative view of the relations between ancient and modern embodiments of thought, so Mr. Conington in these lectures did much towards opening up to the student a historical view of poetry.

As has been already said, he continued to take an active part in all public questions relating to the University. His opinions on the changes introduced by the Act of 1854, are clearly stated in the following letter addressed by him in 1861 to Mr. Grant Duff:—

April 17, 1861.

There can be no doubt that Oxford has already gained very substantially from the effects of the University Commission, and will gain still more when the changes introduced have had time to work.

One of the most obvious benefits is the opening of the Fellowships to the free competition of all undergraduates. Ten years ago, as you know, there were scarcely any open Fellowships except those at Baliol and Oriel, and to a certain extent at University—two or three colleges out of nineteen; the rest being limited, in various ways, chiefly to persons born in certain counties, founders' kindred, and scholars of the College. Now, with one or two exceptions, all have been, or will be, thrown open. Vested interests have been allowed to remain, but these are gradually disappearing, and at the present time half, or nearly half, of the Colleges are in a condition to hold open elections. In former times the best men very often succeeded in getting Fellowships, but this was by no means always the case; and when they did succeed they owed their success to some accident over and above their merit, such as those which I have named—birthplace, founders' kinship, or previous connection with the College. Under the changed system, the stimulus is applied equally, and every undergraduate knows that what he has to look to is his own industry, ability, and good conduct.

Another benefit has been the modification of the restriction, which obliged Fellows to take orders sooner or later. Ten years ago a lay fellowship was almost as rare as an open fellowship, and unfortunately the two did not generally coincide, the open colleges being as a general rule clerical colleges. Now a proportion, varying in different Colleges from one half to one third or one fourth, may be held by laymen. This makes the field of choice greater, removes the temptation to take orders for the sake of retaining the Fellowships, and, in some cases, enables a College to reward men who are likely to do good in some lay profession away from the University; this last being a provision capable of abuse, but capable also of being turned to good.

Another great boon has been the foundation of Professorships, out of the surplus revenues of Colleges. The Colleges had for two or three centuries virtually superseded the University; and though in many respects they had performed their functions well, the loss of efficient University teaching had begun to be seriously felt. In some subjects there was no teaching at all, in others the teaching was too elementary and schoolboy-like. There were professorships in existence, but the professorial system had but little life. On my first coming to Oxford in 1843, I remember asking an older friend what Professors' lectures he would recommend me to attend. His answer was, 'You will soon find that you need not care about any.' As a matter of fact, I believe that during the whole of my undergraduate time I attended none whatever; certainly I did not attend any consecutive course. Had the undergraduates with whom I lived attended, I should have attended; but they did not, and I did not. Attention had been drawn to the subject before the appointment of the Royal Commission in 1850, and changes were in progress which have since borne fruit. But there can be no doubt that the most powerful impulse that has been given in that direction is due to the University Reform Act. Money was required to augment old Professorships and endow new ones, and the operation of a Parliamentary Commission was needed, partly to compel, partly to enable the Colleges to give. We have now a body of working Professors, whose lectures are in some cases numerously, in others respectably, attended; and gradually funds are becoming available for securing them competent incomes. Able men are retained in the University who might otherwise be lost to it; University society gains by their presence, and the literary world may hope in time to gain by their published works.

The last great benefit I shall name is the reform of the University Constitution. Previous to the change the initiative in all legislation was in the hands of a body composed almost entirely of Heads of Colleges—men chosen by their own small societies, not on broad academical grounds, but simply to preside over those societies, and in general prevented by age and isolation from sympathising with the mass of students. Now the Constitution is a representative one; the Council, as it is called, is elected by the votes of the residents, who are only restricted so far that they have to choose in equal proportions from three orders—the Heads of Colleges, the Professors, and the whole body of M.A.'s. Again, under the old system, the measures of the initiative body could not be discussed; all speaking in academical meetings was required to be in Latin, and in consequence it very rarely happened that anybody cared to speak at all. Now every statute, before being finally submitted to the general body of the University, is promulgated at a previous meeting of the residents, who may discuss it in English, and hand in amendments to the initiative body, though they have no power of putting those amendments to the vote, or of voting at all on the same day on which the discussion has taken place. The results even of this modified freedom have been very considerable. Previously but little interest was felt by the mass of the residents in the business of the University; not living in familiar intercourse with members of the initiative body, they knew little or nothing of a measure before it was proposed, had no power of discussing it when it was proposed, and so either allowed it to pass out of simple indifference, or were tempted, in many instances, by party feeling or class jealousy, to vote against it. Now the proceedings of Council are known and canvassed among the residents, the discussions on the promulgation of a statute are not unfrequently interesting and valuable; unintelligent votes are fewer. I do not say that there is not great room for improvement, both in our constitution and in its working; but much has already been done, and the operation of time will do more. And for all this we are indebted to the Act of 1854.

I might also touch on the augmentation which has taken place in the number and value of the scholarships in most of the Colleges—in itself a very great boon to education; but here, though the Commission has done something both to compel and to enable, the changes have generally been such as the Colleges themselves were able, and probably would have been willing, to originate.

Generally I cannot doubt that the mere fact of an extensive enquiry, followed by a reform from without, has greatly quickened the zeal for improvement. The simple publication of the Blue Book of the Royal Commission was itself a great event; it popularised important information hardly accessible till then, and gave to the world the views of many able and practical men which might not otherwise have been expressed. May the Public School Commission be as successful.

In the agitation for the repeal of University Tests, which resulted, after his death, in the passing of the University Tests Abolition Act, he took but little part. In point of fact he was unable to sympathise entirely with either side. He felt on the one hand the injustice, or at least the impolicy, of excluding nonconformists from the emoluments and dignified offices of the University; but on the other hand he entertained the utmost aversion for a measure which seemed to dissociate the Universities from religion, and which proposed to admit persons who might profess no form of Christian belief, on the same footing with Churchmen or orthodox dissenters. He did not approve of the use made of the Thirty-nine Articles as a test to be applied to the laity as well as to the clergy. But he thought it indispensably necessary in the interest of religion that some sort of declaration of faith should be required from every person admitted to a share in the government of the University. And though he would have been contented with the simplest and most comprehensive formula of subscription that could well be devised, yet, when he found that no such proposal was likely to be accepted by either side, he could not help drifting, somewhat to his regret, into an attitude of defence of the *status quo*, as being the less of two evils, between which no middle course was possible. This attitude on his part produced a partial separation, so far as public matters were concerned, between him and some of the friends of University Reform, a separation which was still further widened by the feeling which he entertained that many educational reformers,

both in Oxford and out of it, were anxious in various ways to disparage the classics as the basis of the higher education of the country, and in Oxford itself unduly to subordinate the study of Language to that of History and Philosophy. Indeed, the place assigned to the higher Greek and Latin Philology in the studies of the University was far from giving him complete satisfaction, and he did not often miss an opportunity of asserting its claim to a still larger recognition in the public examinations. His warm interest in all that tended to the advancement of classical learning, as well as his sense of what was right, led him to join actively in the long contest relating to the Regius Professorship of Greek; and even to write a pamphlet in support of its endowment by the University. But he exerted himself to the utmost in opposition to the proposal of Lord Westbury to annex a canonry to the Chair, because that proposal would have had the effect of rendering the office tenable by clergymen only.

In the last two or three years of his life his interest in academic discussions became even more prominent. He gave but a qualified approval to the proposals relating to the admission of unattached students; fearing, in common with many others (though happily the fear has not been justified by the event), that such students would be dangerously exposed to temptations, from which students living within the walls of a college are to a certain degree protected. But he was an earnest supporter of the establishment of a School of Theology, as an independent branch of the final examination. He was himself slowly but steadily acquiring a large amount of theological knowledge, and he naturally thought highly of a scheme which had for its object the encouragement of sacred learning; and which was also a step towards that specialisation of University studies which he believed to be essential to the right development of any one of them. He had always been a regular attendant at the debates in the Congregation of the University; and the proposal to increase the power of that

body, by conceding to it the right of amending measures submitted to it by the Hebdomadal Council, gave him the greatest satisfaction. During the summer term of 1869—the last of his life—the subject was considered in a committee appointed by the University, and those who served on it with him can well remember the lively pleasure which the progress of its deliberations gave him, and the almost boyish freshness with which he entered into every detail of the plan.

During the whole of the fifteen years for which he held the Professorship of Latin, his intellectual activity may be fairly described as unceasing. Upon his edition of Virgil he spared no time or labour; indeed, he found the demands it made upon him so exacting, that in order to get leisure for other work, he was glad, in the latter half of the Æneid, to obtain the assistance of his friend, Mr. Nettleship, by whom the third volume of the work, the result of their joint labours, was brought out shortly after his death. His study of Virgil made him turn to the English translators of Virgil; and thus the old love—dating at least as far back as the purchase of Sotheby's Homer in his schoolboy days at Beverley—for poetical translations of the classics revived within him. He had become so dissatisfied with his Agamemnon that he hesitated a little before a second venture; but when at last he did give way to the strong inward impulse he chose no task less difficult than the Odes of Horace. Probably no translation of Horace has any chance of obtaining a very extensive popularity, and Conington confessed that if he had no other means of subsistence the 'Odes' would not keep him. But he nevertheless had the pleasure of finding his work received with a large measure of approbation by the most competent judges. His success determined him to proceed. The Odes had appeared in 1863; they were followed by the Æneid in 1866, by the last twelve books of the Iliad in 1868, and finally by the Satires, Epistles, and Ars Poetica of Horace in 1869, the last appearing at the very time of his death. The discovery that he could translate his

favourite poets in a manner which gave some satisfaction to himself and others was like finding a new vocation, and was the source of intense enjoyment to him. With all his love for the details of philology, he could not help feeling that they detained him in regions somewhat remote from human sympathy. But now, without quitting his own domain of classical literature, he had found an attentive and sympathetic audience, and had become an interpreter of the ancient world to his own generation in a larger sense than he ever could have been as a mere commentator. His manner of translating was characteristic. He used to learn some couple of hundred lines of his original by heart (if indeed they were not already present to his memory), and then work out his version in his head, sometimes in hours regularly set apart for the purpose, but often at odd times, as in a solitary walk, or on a railway journey, or before he rose in the morning. He used in this way to get through his work with great rapidity, sometimes not writing down each batch of verses till it was quite ready for the press.

The translation of the last twelve books of the Iliad was undertaken in order to complete the unfinished work of the lamented Mr. Worsley, during whose last illness he had promised to discharge this office of piety and affection. It was a labour of love in every sense of the term; it was a pleasure to him to have to translate Homer, and almost an equal pleasure to have to attempt the management of the Spenserian stanza. Nor did he feel it any constraint to be obliged to regulate his treatment of that stanza by Mr. Worsley's. In his preface he half apologises for his hasty mode of composition, pleading that experience taught him that he could not improve his first drafts by retouching them. And probably this extreme facility of production is the source of the graceful fluency which characterises his versions both of the Æneid and the Iliad, and which makes the reader at times forget that it is not an original work which he has before him.

The following letter from the late Earl of Derby, then Chan-

cellor of the University, and himself a distinguished translator of Homer, will be read with pleasure :—

St. James's Square, April 5, 1868.

Dear Sir,

I have delayed thanking you for your obliging letter of the 2nd inst. till I had time, I will not say to read through your translation of the twelve last books of the Iliad, which your publisher had sent me on the previous day, but to look so far into it as to form in my own mind some opinion as to your execution of your difficult task. You will not expect me to abandon my preference for the metre which I had myself adopted; but I may say with truth that I have seen with equal admiration, how readily, in your hands and those of Mr. Worsley, the Spenserian stanza accommodates itself to the text of the original. Here and there no doubt the exigencies of rhyme have led to the introduction of what we used to call at Eton (forgive the expression) a 'botch;' but taken as a whole, you move in your self-imposed trammels with an ease and freedom which excite my astonishment; and, so far as I have yet been able to examine your work, the fidelity of your adherence to the original is very remarkable. I must examine a little into your secret of compression, by which you have brought your version into so much a smaller compass than I was able to accomplish; but in the meantime I hope you will allow me to offer you my congratulations on the general success you have achieved. I must however ask you to forgive me if I enter my protest (notwithstanding your vindication of the practice in your preface) against the liberties which you have taken with the quantities of the proper names, of which I must do you the justice to say that you have selected as an illustration (pp. xix.–xx.) one of the most striking examples.

Requesting you to excuse the freedom of my remarks, I have the honour to be

Dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

Professor Conington. DERBY.

The version of the Æneid has acquired a very considerable popularity. In adopting the octosyllabic metre, familiar to the readers of Scott and Byron, he hazarded a bold experiment, but his boldness has been justified by the event. He was well

aware that this metre could but ill represent the majesty of the Virgilian numbers, and that thus one important characteristic of the great poet must be imperfectly rendered. But he also felt that by means of it he could convey to English readers a just impression of the movement and life of the whole poem, and of the continued variety of its cadences, as well as some faint echo of its pathetic undertones. Thus it has come to pass that—while many great scholars have been unable to forgive the degradation of the Latin hexameter into the metre of Marmion—the book has been a favourite with the world at large—with the *virgines* and *pueri*—and probably has been read through by some who never did as much for any other original or translated epic.

Of all his versions, that of the Satires and Epistles of Horace would seem to have attracted the least attention. This cannot be attributed to any inferiority of execution; for its pages sparkle with wit, and preserve to a surprising extent the tone and spirit of the original. But it would seem that only those strains of the ancient world which are of a higher mood have a chance of making themselves heard in our day; the 'sermo pedestris,' and the 'mitis sapientia' of the Satires and Epistles have counterparts, and no mean ones, in our own literature, and, when presented in an English dress, do not seem to rise above their rivals.

When he had sent the last sheet of the Ars Poetica to the press he would gladly have begun to occupy himself in the same way with some other Latin poet. But neither with Lucretius nor Catullus did he feel any deep sympathy. In the case of Juvenal, he considered the ground pre-occupied by Gifford, and the obscurity of Persius called for a commentary rather than a poetic version. On the whole, therefore, he determined to give up translating for a while, and to take for the subject of his next task the history of Latin literature, or at least of Latin poetry, during the silver age. Though no transcendent interest attaches to any poet of that age, he was of opinion

that not enough had yet been done by English scholars to direct attention to a group of writers whose very faults are instructive to us, from their belonging to a time the circumstances of which are in some respects comparable to our own. One other work he had marked out for himself, but as one which he desired rather than hoped to accomplish—a complete edition of Tacitus. Unlike many great scholars, he took less pleasure in the criticism of classical texts, than in their interpretation. He was by no means without the gift of conjectural criticism, as even his early attempts in the *Epistola Critica* to Dean Gaisford prove, nor was he disposed to underrate the results which have been obtained by means of it. But his long devotion to Virgil, whose text is better ascertained perhaps than that of any other classic, had given him an increased distaste for the uncertainties of emendation; and in his choice of Tacitus he was partly guided by the circumstance that the text of that author is based upon the authority of only one or two MSS., and that consequently conjectural or palæographical criticism must be supposed to have already done for it as much as can be expected. On the other hand, the condensed eloquence of Tacitus, which suggests so much that is not expressly said, seemed to invite the same kind of minute analysis which had yielded such good results in the case of the Greek and Latin poets. Conington used to say that he seldom opened Tacitus without finding something which, as far as he could make out, had either not been explained at all, or had been explained amiss. The vast extent and difficulty of the work, which, as he well knew, if he once undertook it, must occupy him for many years, was one reason for his giving it only the second place in his plans of future employment; another was his want of interest in history itself, which he felt to be a great drawback on his fitness to be the editor of a historian. But, whether this diffidence on his part was well or ill founded, it is difficult not to feel that the loss of this meditated work is the greatest of the many losses which Latin scholarship has sustained by his death.

His activity as a correspondent kept pace with his activity as an author. He liked to write of what occupied him at the moment, and thus, the more work he was doing the more letters he wrote. And in truth they cost him but very little trouble, for they were as free and unrestrained as his conversation. Unfortunately, they are often not well suited for publication, dealing as they do with the intimacies of private life, or with more public matters of very temporary importance. But they are models of the 'familiar style,' if this expression may be allowed; and they exemplify a still higher sort of excellence, for it would be difficult to find in them a trace of unkindness towards any human being. His wit had at all times been free from the slightest tinge of bitterness, and in his later years he was, from conscientious motives, almost morbidly apprehensive of saying or writing anything, even in the most good-humoured way, which could put another person in a disadvantageous light. Some of his longest letters are addressed to his younger friends, of whom he had many; for generally in each successive generation of undergraduates he would attach to himself one or two of the most promising scholars, and would exert himself indefatigably for their improvement. It was his custom for many years to spend a portion of every long vacation with a reading party of young friends, not acting in any formal manner as their private tutor, but often giving them as much of his time as if he had undertaken that duty. There are not a few who look back upon the days they thus spent with him as among the happiest in their lives, and who regard the university successes which they obtained as the least of the advantages which they derived from the instruction and assistance which he so freely gave. Latterly, indeed, he gave up his yearly reading parties; not that the society of young men had grown less congenial to him, but because a nearer duty claimed him elsewhere. His father had died in 1861, his brother Frank in 1863, his brother Henry early in 1868; his still surviving sister was settled in the south of England. Thus the care of his aged

mother devolved very mainly upon him; and, in order to be with her as much as possible, he never stayed in Oxford a day longer than the statutes of his Chair required. To his mother he had always been most devotedly attached; his letters to her at all times of his life breathe a spirit of the most intimate confidence; and now, the thought that in consequence of so many bereavements he had become the chief stay of her declining years, gave a new impulse to his feelings, and inspired his affectionate nature with a still deeper tenderness.

The following selection of passages from his letters has been made somewhat casually, and the names of many of his most favoured correspondents are absent from it. Still these extracts will be found to bear the impress of his simple and amiable character, and to give some evidence of his critical acuteness and sound judgment in literary questions.

To C. Cholmeley Puller, Esq.

Boston, August 23, 1858.

It is perhaps a pity that you are reading 'King Lear' in a variorum Shakspere. I bought a copy a year ago, not wishing to be ignorant of what the various commentators have said, but it is weary work, wearier than any good commentary on a classical author. Your plan of reading Sophocles by your own light, before resorting to notes, might, I think, be transferred to Shakspere with more advantage. Indeed, in the passages where the thought is difficult, one generally has to be one's own guide, though notes are sometimes wanted to explain obsolete terms, old customs, &c. I think, perhaps, I could generally help you to a meaning if you would send the passages to me as they occur; at least I found that, with the helps we have here and my own wit, I made it all out to my own satisfaction when I had to give my lecture. What am I to say to you about the tragedy itself—so overwhelmingly tremendous—so true to nature—and so full of things from which every one may learn? Study the characters as they evolve themselves, observing, *e.g.*, the relation between Edmund and Gloster in the first scene, the way in which the old man speaks of the sin of his youth, and the kind of influences under which the base-born son has evidently been reared. Observe again how the two tragedies of filial ingrati-

tude play into each other, and how Gloster is deceived by Edmund all the more readily because he sees Lear to have been deceived by his daughters. Ask yourself what it is that makes the conduct of Goneril and Regan appear so monstrous, while so much that they say about their father's irritating changefulness of mood is shown to be just by the play itself. Try and make out—I have scarcely made it out to my own satisfaction—why Cordelia, seeing Lear's state of mind, does not humour it, but deliberately says less than she feels. These are some of the points that will meet you in the earlier part of the play; as you get on, I can easily suggest others if you think well.

I am myself reading Dante, in Carlyle's prose translation, which is, I should think, as good as a prose translation can be. I don't know Italian—and Dante's Italian is peculiar—but I am glad to have it at the bottom of the page to compare every now and then with the English, by the light of one's knowledge of the cognate languages. I began it about a year ago, for the first time, but dropped it, and now I have got nearly to the same point, and hope to go on. I can see enough to satisfy me that it is very great—a simpler and severer Milton—Homeric in its *naïveté*, but not garrulous as Homer is, and as full of the learning and thought of its time, I should think, as the Paradise Lost, while there is a spirit of intense patriotism pervading the whole. I was very much struck with a passage where he makes Virgil speak of 'that low Italy ("humilem Italiam"), for which the virgin Camilla and Euryalus, and Turnus, and Nisus died of their wounds;' a view of the latter part of the Æneid which Virgil never dreamed of, but appealing profoundly to the spirit of Italian nationality.

Boston, September 6, 1858.

. . . . Again, I can understand the impatience with which, as you say, you regard this prolonged arming for the battle of life. I can understand it, having felt it, or something like it, myself at one time. Now I fear I am in the other extreme, shrinking from anything which involves action or struggle, and fancying that the time for them is not come yet. But I suppose a man who goes on residing at Oxford may be excused for not recognising any broad differences between the time during which he was educating himself, and the time after which he is supposed to have completed his education. Meantime there are perhaps one or two things which you scarcely bear in mind enough. Metaphors are apt to mislead, and

though there is a distinction undoubtedly between the time of pupilage and the time of independent action, it is not quite the same as that between arming and fighting. A good deal of fighting goes on during the process which you designate as arming, and each stage is an arming for a further stage. At Eton you have been arming for a battle at Oxford, which is only just beginning, and when you enter on life you will still have to arm yourself as well as to fight. Remember too that in Oxford a great portion of your work will be entirely new. You already see that there are intellectual worlds of which you scarcely dreamed at Eton, and you will hardly doubt that to explore them will be a worthy object for these coming three years. Would you be nearer to real life, think you, if you were to begin to read law now, leaving speculative politics, moral philosophy, works of imagination, and 'things in general,' to take their chance? If so, fortunate are they who become clerks in attorneys' offices as soon as they leave school, though it is not on them that Fortune is commonly supposed to smile most. I could lecture you too for saying that it is better to be base than not to be free, and tell you (what would be true) that liberty which does not obey some kind of law is a very base thing indeed. I could point to your own programme of work as a standing witness in favour of external law, but instead of that I will show you that at one time I used to indulge in the same strain, by quoting some stanzas of a poem which I wrote while under pressure of working for the schools in 1846:—

(Metrum Barrett Browningianum.)

Aye, routine may do for planets, and the stars may have their courses,
But we are no planet-system, we are living, thinking men;
Framed with higher aspirations, and impelled by other forces,
Than the bodies which are measured by the telescopic ken.

Both alike are bound by nature in one vast harmonious concord;
We and they move on together, but move on in different ways:
For the human spirit's music is not played alone on one chord,
But results at once from many—it is free while it obeys.

Lo, the chains with which you bind it, it has cast them far behind it,
Owing, paying no allegiance, save to Truth's eternal laws:
Drawn by them, it hastens onward, like an eagle soaring sunward,
And through infinite successions, gazes ever on a cause.

There, if that does not show that I can sympathise with you, I don't know what should. But I fear it is rather stuff, nevertheless.

Boston, September 13, 1858.

. . . . I am gratified by your eldest brother's good opinion of the preface to Virgil. I do not myself think it a very remarkable or satisfactory piece of work, and perhaps the expunctions which I had to make have rendered it less so than it might otherwise have been, though on this point, as you may remember, Froude and H. Smith are at issue. If I might venture to recommend any other part of the volume to your brother, it would be the two introductions to the Eclogues and Georgics, which seem to me by far the best things in the book for a general reader. It is hard to judge of one's own things, and I find that even when I seem to myself to have striven most successfully to be popular, people complain of me as abstruse and ponderous, as in the case of my Oxford Essay; but the introductions were found interesting by serious persons who heard them as lectures; and my *Spectator* critic seemed to think that I had succeeded, as I certainly tried to do, in combining actual information about Virgil with such broad and general views as would interest those accustomed to general literature. But enough of this—only one occasionally indulges in such self-approving, self-excusing remarks to one's self, and so every now and then they become audible to one's friends as well. . . . . To your remarks on literary and general matters I have two or three exceptions to make, though you will not believe that they interest me less because I cannot agree with them. I am not sure that you are regarding Carlyle altogether from the point of view from which he wishes to be regarded. You ask 'Does he mean us to admire A., to condemn B., and so on?' whereas I fancy that he means his reader to give no such unqualified verdict. History with him, I take it, is a thing to understand and to accept, rather than to judge; to a certain extent he seems to regard it as beyond human judgment. Without being a fatalist, he evidently looks upon the course of events as a thing which cannot be influenced by one man, scarcely by a generation of men; even the evil-doers are not responsible for all the evil that is brought about through their means, as, but for generations of previous evil-doers, they would not have had the same power for mischief; so that wonder and pity come in as well as blame, say for Lewis XV.; much more for the

Sans Culottes, whom, without admiring, he evidently thinks very little short of an inevitable fact. I do not at present say whether he is right or wrong, I merely explain what I take his view to be. Judging after the event, we may very likely see that the government ought to have coerced the noblesse; but—judging before it—the noblesse had not shown their weakness, that was a thing to be learnt. They had stood in the forefront of other civil wars. They must still have had a great prestige—in fact, a France in which they should not have the upper hand had not yet made itself conceivable. . . . . To what I said about a man's being practically acquitted who follows the general opinion of his time I quite adhere. I do not see how anybody who reads history can deny that morality is, to a certain extent, progressive. Surely to say that persecution was at one time not thought a vice, and toleration not recognised as a virtue, is to state a truism; and there is no want of scriptural authority for allowing, within limits, the plea of ignorance. Indeed, what do you gain by disallowing it? You condemn a whole age; then you have to take the condemnation for granted, and try the different individuals anew. No doubt it would be simpler if we could apply the same rule to everything and everybody; but the complexity is one which meets us in every case where circumstances have to be taken into account, and to deal with a complex case simply is neither philosophical nor just. Of course there is a unity which runs through our judgment even of the most different men and the most different things, but it is a unity which is compatible with almost infinite diversity, and so far from 'destroying the interest of historical discussion,' I cannot doubt that it greatly enhances it. My space obliges me to be brief, and so I cannot avoid the appearance of contradicting you rather than of arguing with you, but you will pardon me. I shall be very glad to return to the subject if you will restate your case, as I feel I could say a good deal more about it.

September 20, 1858.

I am very glad that you like my introduction to the Eclogues. If you will turn to p. 8, beginning 'Nor would it be just,' you will find a passage which was intended to apply not only to Virgil, but, 'mutatis mutandis,' to myself. Curiously enough I find a similar remark in Deerbrook, where a character, into whose mouth Miss Martineau evidently puts many of her own thoughts, says, 'I saw

plenty of summer sunrises, but none of them gave me a feeling like the two lines—

> "Now morn, her rosy steps in the Eastern clime
> Advancing, sowed the earth with orient pearl."'

. . . . When I talk of morality being progressive, I do not mean exactly that a steady approach to the Christian standard has been making during the eighteen Christian centuries. There is a fashion in vices, and if in some respects we are better than our fathers, I can well believe that in others we are worse. But there are certain questions where morality seems to have advanced simply by the widening of thought; persecution is one, slavery is another. Would you condemn a Christian slave-owner under the Roman empire as you would condemn a Christian slave-owner now? 'We have no right now to excuse ourselves by comparison with our neighbours.' True, but have we no right to excuse our neighbours in comparison with ourselves? It is the self-excusation which is the evil; we are not fair judges in our own case, and it is our duty to strive against our faults instead of palliating them. But where we can judge fairly, there surely we may and ought to take difference of circumstances, antecedents, traditional opinions, and the like, into account.

P.S. Did you see an impertinent large-type letter in Friday's *Times*, comparing a kennel to a Greek play, and especially to the 'Choephoroe'? It made me feel a kind of brotherhood with the sporting world, which I had certainly never expected to feel.

Boston, October 4, 1858.

The article on the first volume of the Virgil in the *Saturday Review* is really a very skilful one, if you come to examine it: it has the appearance of strong eulogy, but it is really very guarded and qualified in its language. I fancy it nearly hits the mark in speaking of the class of the edition, though vanity winces a little at being told that it is merely a student's book. But I do hope, if I live, to be able to show that I can do something more than 'clear the whole ground for the literary critic.' 'An examination into Virgil's place in literature, and into the modes in which he appeals to our imagination and taste,' is quite within the scope of an edition like mine, as I conceive it; and if I have not regularly attempted it as yet, it is because I thought I should be better qualified for it in a later volume, when I have studied the whole of him as I have

now studied a part. I have read also the review in the *Press*, and find there is hardly anything in it of which I can really complain, except it be an inference that, as I have chosen to comment on Virgil and Pope, my bias is all for refinement of execution as against grandeur of design, and that any admission I make in favour of the latter is extorted from me by the spirit of the time, which will not let me be so *borné* as I should have been 100 years ago—just what Macaulay says of Gladstone's admissions in favour of toleration. If I am to be judged by the subjects I have chosen, surely the 'Agamemnon' and 'Choephoroe' ought to be allowed to count. . . . I fear my chance of finding favourable dispositions at Youngsbury would be damaged irreparably, if I were to confess to anyone but you how little interest I take in the comet; and even you, perhaps, will not be able to forgive me without an effort, and a conscious reflection on some of my countervailing good qualities. In justice to my people here, I must observe that I stand quite alone; my father and mother both watch it with lively interest, so that I really fancy at times that my own apathy must be something more than a mere defect. But a comet with me awakens no train of associations; its laws belong to astronomy, of which I know nothing. This year at least it has not formed the nucleus of superstitious anticipations, which might compel one's interest from the very fact of their having taken so strong a hold of our common humanity, however far one might be from sharing them one's self, while the mere sight of it affects me but little. I suppose I do not see it very distinctly, and it appears to me different indeed from the stars, but yet not wholly unlike them, and altogether not so completely *sui generis* but that it can be remembered sufficiently after it has been once or twice seen. You will understand that I am not reflecting on the interest taken by others, but simply explaining the grounds of my own insensibility. It is doubtless one of my intellectual faults that my sphere of knowledge is so narrow; and it may be a fault, too, that where I have not knowledge I have not interest, not caring for things on a broad popular ground. There is probably the counterbalancing advantage that my interest is worth more when I do feel it. I take in the various bearings of an object that I care for. Still I believe that I am wrong, and that it would be better for me if my feelings were more frequently enlisted on matters which I am not likely to have much to say about, either in talking or writing. As I am scribbling I get a letter from one of my few lady correspondents, containing the following passage:

'I wonder whether you have looked at the comet—seeing it you could hardly escape; but I suppose you make a point of "not encouraging that phenomenon."'

Boston, January 4, 1859.

. . . . Besides, I have been reading, or dipping into, various other books. My brother Frank has got Buckle at home, and I have been looking more at him, though still not consecutively. Do you know an exceedingly impertinent note of his about scholars, and the harm they have done to their own language, where he goes so far as to say that the reason why women *confessedly* write and speak their own language so much better than men is, that they have had no classical training? I suspect it is a sample of his one-sided and random way of writing. He is right in attacking Parr, who did corrupt his mother tongue, certainly; but Bentley's Milton is not a case in point, while Bentley's own English was exceedingly good and vigorous. As for the scholars of the present day, their English style is not more Latinised or foreign than Buckle's own; in fact the very passage in which Buckle makes the attack is anything but free from Latin or technical terms.

Boston, January 25, 1859.

On the whole, my recollections of him [Hallam] are exceedingly pleasing. He was full of conversation on all literary subjects, and his manner was very amiable and courteous, in talking as well as writing. The *Times* I have no doubt speaks truly of the softening effect produced on him by his great sorrows. I suppose it may be long before we see another historian or critic gifted with the same thorough good sense and impartiality. Certainly there is nothing like it in those who have since risen up. His Whig sympathies you will value more than I do. I think, however, I had heard that he rather recoiled before the Reform Bill of 1832, and thought things were going too far. I remember, in the supplemental notes to his 'Middle Ages,' published soon after the Revolution of 1848, he took occasion to compliment Guizot as one whom 'Non civium ardor prava jubentium . . . . Mente quatit solidâ,' when a reviewer remarked that he had not dared to quote the intervening line 'Non vultus instantis tyranni.' Generally he dealt out scant justice to characters that had anything extreme or excessive about them. Tait, I recollect, used to say to us when we were reading the 'Constitutional History' in form: 'He evidently thinks Luther mad.'

To W. J. Courthope, Esq.

Boston, January 15, 1864.

I expected that my Statius article would be simply a matter of copying; the publisher, however, who seems to be editor also, was of opinion that it was too short and too little critical; and as that was at bottom my own opinion also, and I knew it was shared by others who had heard the lecture, I conquered my indisposition to reconstruct a thing already finished, and have added four or five pages on the poet's style and mode of narration, which, if not as elaborately written as the earlier part, will, I hope, be lively enough. I suppose it will appear about the end of the month. All else that I have done has been revising some of my Persius notes. Perhaps I may have to do more than I bargained for in the way of collating MSS., as it appears that the English MSS. have been a good deal neglected hitherto, and there are some at Cambridge and in the British Museum, besides five or six at Oxford.

Boston, June 28, 1866.

I am grooving down into work here, though I have hardly taken as kindly to my real business, the commentary on Virgil, as I ought to do. Of translation I have done a fair quantity, chiefly outstanding fragments of Greek poets for Miss Winkworth's 'Bunsen,' *remanets* from last year. These are mostly elegiac—Callinus, Tyrtæus, Solon—and I have rendered them line for line in elegiac quatrains, I hope with some terseness, and some of the simplicity of the original. They come very easily, so that I got through about 170 lines between Monday afternoon and Tuesday evening. And now I am trying Homer. At first he was very difficult, quite baffling my railway-carriage efforts last week. Now he is easier, but it is still rather like dancing in fetters. What sort of jingle I make I scarcely know. I write plenty of rough lines in the hope of avoiding monotony, and sometimes fancy that the effect is not bad; but of the hidden soul of Spenserian melody I have no notion. In the main I aim at giving the Greek line for line, with a simplicity which I allow to run into uncouthness. The labour of finding four similar sounds for each stanza is considerable, and for the present at least prevents anything like spontaneity. But I seem to find it easier as I go on; only I have a constant sense of twisting and torturing the language, which a translator of Homer, I take it, ought not to have.

Oxford, October 26, 1866.

This morning I hope to make some return for your two letters. As usual, I have found a good deal to occupy me since my return, and though my evenings are oftener vacant than they used to be, I don't like to scribble off a few lines to you when I am half asleep.

I understand, I think, pretty well what you say about the experiences that you have gone through. No doubt your 'Greats' reading, aided by the Oxford atmosphere, was likely to introduce you to a new world; it is natural also that you should feel that, being introduced to it, you have some duties to it—that you cannot ignore it and write as if it were not. Those little expressions of imaginative feeling that you used to throw off, doubtless seem to you very inadequate now—'major rerum tibi nascitur ordo,' and you are perplexed and confounded by it. Probably you make too much of the time that you have lost. A poet need not so completely absorb the culture of his age as to make it necessary that he should be posted up to twelve o'clock on the day that he begins to write. You have lost nothing that you may not make up if life be given you; and the 'sensations and fancies' to which you have surrendered yourself have been helping to give your thoughts the body, the artistic form, without which intellectual impressions are not poetry at all. My metaphor may be ill chosen; but you will see what I mean. Your first thing, it seems to me, ought to be to determine, on as probable grounds as you can, what you can do intellectually and what you cannot. *Intellectually*, I say, distinguishing again the intellect from the imagination and artistic powers. How much of the intellectual culture of your time can you reasonably hope to realise and appropriate? Very few poets can appropriate all the culture of their time, or anything like all. If you form your plans with a view to realising more of this culture than you are likely to realise, your work, I suppose, will be an ambitious failure: if you calculate accurately, then, though you may not achieve all that at times you may have hoped, you will achieve something real. Are you likely, think you, to contribute anything to the solution of the theological and philosophical problems of the time *directly*? If not, do not trouble yourself about them as matters for poetry; use them if you like as materials for illustration and ornamentation, but not further. That your poetry, if it is good for anything, will contribute something indirectly to the strengthening, quieting, and clearing of men's minds you may be sure. Aim at something certain, however limited. I don't mean that you are to

go after the first little thing that comes uppermost, but that you are to choose something which, being in itself large enough to give occupation to the mind, is likely in reason to be accomplished. I was miserable till I found my *métier*—kept wasting myself in efforts which I could not myself approve, or get others to approve; and at last, in despair, I returned to scholarship as something which I knew I could do, though as my world widened I had come to despise it as inadequate. Now I am reaping, I hope, the reward of those stormy turbid years in a way that I had ceased to expect. I find that, though I cannot write any original verse, I can translate well enough to make it worth while continuing to do so. But this came to me, as you know, 'longo post tempore,' when I had ceased for years to entertain the hope of being able to write anything but prose. I am not of course comparing our two cases except in the most general way; your natural element is probably poetry, and the question is simply between the more and less ambitious sorts of it. Again, I am not recommending μικροψυχία as such. I am only saying that if you *cannot* strike the mean it may be the better extreme. By all means keep your mind open, and be ready to recognise any way in which God may be drawing you, anything to which your powers and circumstances seem to point. But remember that in this as in higher matters it is well not to 'seek great things,' but to be content if 'your life is given to you as a prey.'

Perhaps I may seem to wander from your real case, and to use language inapplicable to you. You know that I am not likely to warn you of vanity or self-conceit, for I don't think you want any such warning; if I did, I would. But a person honestly seeking to employ his powers properly may be led wrong by aiming at too much—by thinking small beginnings unworthy; and the new-born sense of infinite possibilities about you is peculiarly likely to foster that feeling. I have spoken as if your difficulty were about subjects, and did not extend to style; but I can well believe that to be a difficulty also. All I can say, then, in the absence of anything definite from you to guide me, is that while I would not have you sacrifice any of the peculiar charm which belongs to almost everything that I have seen of yours, I would have you remember that you must look to as wide a circle of readers as you can; readers who may not be in sufficient sympathy with you to detect what you mean without trouble, and who naturally wish to take no trouble that they can help—readers of another generation than this, who will naturally find pleasure, not in what is temporary and special,

but in what is permanent and general. 'And of these things let so much be said for the present;' but I will return to them whenever you ask me. Your confidence in me, you may be sure, is very pleasant.

To J. A. Symonds, Esq.

March 24, 1866.

The saddest thing this term is the news about Worsley, who is, I fear, at length dying. He had an attack of hæmorrhage at Christmas, was in imminent danger for four or five days, then for ten days or a fortnight seemed to be rallying, but has since gone back, so that now no hope seems to be entertained. I have had one or two notes from him, very kind and affectionate; but when I last heard, he could scarcely even dictate, for fear of bringing on coughing. He expressed regret at having to leave his Iliad unfinished. This set me thinking whether I could do anything, and at last, after much doubt, I tried to translate the beginning of the Eighteenth Iliad in something like his style, and succeeded better than I had expected. So now I have undertaken to take up the work after he is gone, simply in order that his copyright may not suffer. I need not say that I do not hope to attain the higher qualities of his version; but the outward appearance is easier to catch than I thought. I think I can manage to keep pretty close to the Greek, and perhaps my name may be worth something with the translation-buying public. This accordingly will be my *horæ subsecivæ* occupation when the translation of Virgil is done. That work is nearly *in statu quo*. After leaving you I did a little, then it went to sleep for the time, now it is reviving again. I am still dissatisfied with myself at the present moment (you know I fluctuate very much), and the discovery that I can do Spenser stanzas better than I thought rather cuts away my ground for adopting the Walter Scott metre, that it was the only one I could manage for long together.

Talking of translations, I found my first impression of Milman confirmed. The book is very unequal, in parts (the passage about Helen and about the urns in the second chorus especially) very good, though even then not Æschylean, in parts exceedingly indifferent. The inaccuracies are great and glaring, sometimes owing to obsolete interpreters, which one can excuse; sometimes resulting from carelessness, which is less excusable. One wonders

that he did not get some one to look through the translation for him. The Bacchae looked to me the better of the two, but that may be because one is not saturated with the original, and because the existing translations, Potter and Wodhull, are poor enough. Like all the world, I have been reading 'Ecce Homo,' which I admire, but not enthusiastically. My difficulties are not those which it professes to meet; our Lord's character does not require credibilising to my mind, and any attempt to do so under the circumstances is almost sure to appear worse than useless. The most interesting part I thought the latter chapters, where the evangelical virtues are translated into their modern equivalents. But it is no doubt a very considerable effort, and would, I should think, do something to the 'restoration of belief.'

August 3, 1866.

After a little stiffness I soon found that I could write the Spenser stanza even more easily than the Walter Scott. For this I see two reasons: 1, that the stanza itself gives swing, so that one has not to think so much how to create it; 2, that the style one adopts in Homer is more incondite than that in Virgil—'did say,' and the like. Everything considered, the rhymes have really given me very little trouble. I keep closer to Homer than Worsley, it is 'my nature to,' and I feel it is my one chance, as I have not his native vein to fall back upon; perhaps, too, though I say it very doubtfully, I may have a greater command of poetical commonplaces, and so am less put about. The result is, I hope, fairly good on the whole. I am nearly as close as the blank verse translators; in about three-fourths of my work, even closer than (say) Lord Derby, and the metre makes me (*me judice*) more pleasing than they. Almost all the credit of this is due to Worsley, as the inventor of the style which I have endeavoured to follow; but, as aforesaid, I think the style a success. The difficulty is not so much in finding rhymes as in breaking up the original into stanzas. Sometimes there is a convenient lump of nine lines, in which case I generally manage to render line for line with very little sacrifice; but more commonly the cleavage comes at the tenth, eighth, or seventh, and then I have to contract or expand as the case may be. The proper names are a difficulty. I do a good deal in the way of anapæsts for iambuses —'Polydamas spoke,' 'Deiphobus slew,' &c.—which perhaps may give my English readers some trouble.

To A. O. Prickard, Esq.

Boston, October 9, 1868.

. . . . All Oxford, I presume, is talking about Mansel's elevation. Many things occur to me to say on the subject. So far as he is concerned I don't grudge it, though I had rather hoped they might have taken Merivale, who is a better *analogon* of Milman, and a more obvious person for a metropolitan deanery. But Mansel has deserved well of science and learning, and not wholly ill of theology, let alone Conservative principles. To the University the thing is rather humiliating. It seems to justify what was said when he was transferred from Philosophy to Ecclesiastical History—that in a university where the dignity of knowledge was properly valued no one would accept an exchange from a subject which he had properly studied to a subject which he had not studied merely because the latter was better endowed. And now, before he has had time to leave any mark on Ecclesiastical History, the Government which appointed him whirls him off in a different direction. I don't blame him—possibly, under the same circumstances, I might do the same thing—give up Latin (say) and go into Parliament; but it certainly shows that the appreciation of knowledge in England is not in a satisfactory state, and it shows also, I think, that the Crown is not absolutely fitted to look after the interests of the University. To the Conservative body in Oxford it must be a considerable blow. I don't suppose that for some time past he had been very available for active party purposes; but he was beyond all question their most considerable man with the world at large. Resident Liberals might not appreciate him (one of their most patent weaknesses, I have long thought), but the intellectual public outside knew that his was one of the chief Oxford names. I suppose now the Conservatives have no one, at least of this generation, who has really made himself a name. I mean, of course, the Conservatives proper, not Pusey and his party. All this is of good augury for the Liberals, at least for the next few years; what monsters may rise up from the deep during that time one cannot say. Magee's appointment is a curious one. I suppose it may either be taken as a slap in the face to those who are attacking the Irish Church, in which case it is rather plucky, or as an instinctive movement like that of rats leaving a falling house. In himself I should think he was a very good man to choose; he is said to have great pulpit powers, and a paper of his in defence of the Irish Church in the *Contemporary*, early in the year, was not only well written,

but showed much good humour and play of mind. Ditto an extract I saw the other day from a speech of his at the Dublin Congress.

To the Rev. E. H. Bradby.

Boston, June 30, 1868.

I, as I dare say you may have seen, have been relieving my mind by denouncing ritualist interpretations of the Communion Service in the *Contemporary Review*, and I am following up the blow this month by a similar demolition of similar explanations of the Articles, where the case, as might be expected, is still grosser than in the Prayer Book. I have begun to print Vol. III. of Virgil, and hope to get on pretty fast with it this summer; but it will not be out before next year. The volume of the translation of the Iliad is out, though the Reviews have scarcely shown themselves conscious of its existence. Private judges seem to speak favourably of it, and I think myself it is as good as anything I have done.

To W. J. Courthope, Esq.

Boston, January 16, 1869.

. . . . This will show you that your advice has begun to bear fruit. I tried the first few lines [of the First Satire of Horace] in a solitary walk after you were gone on Monday, as usual without much hope of making anything of them, and though they did not come very well at first, as I got further I found myself better pleased with them. I shall be very anxious to hear what you think. The style aims at what I told you, an imitation of Cowper. I indulge in colloquial abbreviations more than he does, and have more inversions of verbs, a thing from which he is, I find, singularly free, more so than Pope in his 'Imitations of Horace'; but I don't think either of these matters (at least as I practise them) really involves a deviation from the easy colloquial style of good society, which is what I suppose answers in English to Horace in Latin. The two translations I have by me are Francis and a certain Howes. The first I have no doubt I have beaten, and on the whole I hope the second, though he has a great many good lines, and in some cases has anticipated me, if indeed I have not reproduced him unconsciously.

Oxford, January 20, 1869.

I confess I am disappointed at your opinion of 'Horace,' not so much at the opinion itself (so far as you express it) as at the

grounds on which you put it. When we talked about the matter at Boston, I thought you distinctly urged me to undertake the work on the ground that a translation was wanted. Now you seem to say that no translation can be successful, because of the dimness and coldness of the time-basis, as Dr. Carlyle calls it in speaking of Dante, and that imitations are the only things. These, of course, we have, therefore there is no want. All that I can infer from this is that you have changed your opinion since we spoke of the thing, and that my translation has been the unlucky means of your doing so—a sufficiently likely, but not a flattering conclusion.

My own opinion, so far as I can take an external view of the question, is this. To all that you have said about the reasons for imitation I entirely subscribe; it is just what impresses itself on me in every paragraph which I translate. The 'time-basis' becomes very cold indeed at times, names are meaningless and even jokes have sometimes to be dodged, not met fairly. But an imitation cannot do all that a translation might, and the question is whether there is not room for a translation, allowing for all inevitable imperfections. Did the existence of 'London' and the Vanity of human wishes, cut the ground from under Gifford's Juvenal? I cannot think it did. Whether people would care for Gifford apart from the Latin I don't know. I only know that I care for it a good deal, and I trust there are others who feel with me. There is to me a distinct pleasure in seeing an author whom I know transfused well into English—a sense of correspondence and fitness which appeals to me strongly. Two questions then remain, Is Horace less translatable than Juvenal? and am I hopelessly inferior to Gifford? The first may be the case to a certain extent, but I think the extent may easily be exaggerated. The real difficulty is in writing easily and idiomatically in any particular style. One who tends to passionate declamation may write in the style of Juvenal, one whose manner is more level in the style of Horace. But there is much in Juvenal which is as colloquial as anything in Horace, and some of Gifford's most successful bits are in passages of this sort. On the whole, I don't think Horace less translatable than any writer of original power must necessarily be. This is of course an opinion formed on a week's experience, and I may hereafter see reason to change it. Now for myself. The counts that I could bring against myself are heavy enough, but the question is, Can I do the Satires and Epistles as well as I have done the Odes, the Æneid, and the Iliad? My own belief (founded on the same limited experience,

and contrary to what I expressed when talking to you) is, I confess, that I can. I am not sanguine of obtaining a great success, but I don't think I ought to lose reputation, and meantime the occupation will be pleasant.

This is how the case seems to me to stand; if you will give me your judgment from that point of view, I shall be very grateful. Don't fear speaking out. If you say anything unfavourable, of course I shall feel it; I value your opinion too much not to do so, but I shall be grateful all the same. What are we meant for except to criticise each other for our good to the best of our ability?

Oxford, January 27, 1869.

I *have* been going on with the translation, and have done the third Satire and the greater part of the fourth. I don't suppose they would materially alter your opinion, but perhaps they do to some small extent meet by anticipation one of your objections to what you have seen. I think I have introduced into them a certain number of lines which may fairly be called *points*, so that the reader is rewarded from time to time for the dead level he goes over. Sometimes I have been antithetical where Horace is straightforward; sometimes I have brought into prominence an image at which he has only hinted. I scarcely knew why I began to do this, I suppose from some sense of the exigencies of composition; but I have continued it deliberately, on a sort of principle of compensation on which I occasionally acted in Virgil—that where one was obliged from time to time to rub off a little from the point of the Latin, one might from time to time give the Latin a point which it was without. I think the composition is improved in strength and vigour by it, without losing much of its character. However, I will not praise myself beforehand. I am only too fond of my last baby, whatever it happens to be, and possibly when you see the new work on your next visit here, you will think it substantially the same as you have already seen. My chief difficulty is about the rhythm. I don't like not to run the couplets into each other occasionally, as otherwise I make no attempt to reproduce Horace; but I scarcely ever do so without a suspicion of discord, especially since I have taken to writing antithetically.

* * * * * * * * * *

A difficulty which seems to me greater than that about the names (though it is in fact only the same difficulty in another form) is about the social customs. Translate them verbally, they are un-

meaning; paraphrase them, they lose all point; substitute modern customs for them, and of course the thing becomes an imitation. Names can be taken on trust because they are names; at all events they don't lose in translation, though they cease to have associations; but significant words have the fate of all significant words when you change them, they become significant of something else. I doubt whether, when I started, I was sufficiently alive to this difficulty, and it is quite possible that before I get much further I may find myself shipwrecked by it altogether. As yet I seem to myself still above water. The very fact of there being a choice of evils gives me some help. Sometimes I translate closely, sometimes paraphrase, sometimes modernise cautiously, while I try occasionally to give Horace a little point which he has not. I could give you instances of each, but I fear I should be ruining what little chance I have of producing any effect on you when I come to read what I have written to you continuously, which is of course the real test. This, I suppose, is a difficulty which presses equally on a translator of Juvenal; and Gifford seems to have met it, as I am trying to meet it, by varying his expedients. I will just give you a few instances where I think he succeeds in this or other matters, as it will show you what I aim at myself:—

> Sed Rufum atque alios cædit sua quemque juventus,
> And *boys with bibs* strike Rufus on his chair.

Here the *bibs* are of course modern, and no detail at all was needed; but he doubtless felt he wanted to get more point than he could get by a simple rendering, so he got the thought of the bibs and also the alliteration.

> Cede, Palæmon!
> Et patere inde aliquid decrescere, non aliter quam
> Institor hibernæ tegetis, niveique cadurci.
>
> Courage, Palæmon! be not over nice,
> But suffer some abatement in your price,
> As those who deal in rugs will ask you high,
> And sink by pence and half-pence till you buy.

The 'hibernæ tegetis niveique cadurci' are huddled up into 'rugs,' but you get the detail of 'pence and half-pence' in their place.

> Occidit miseros crambe repetita magistros.
>
> Till like hashed cabbage served for each repast,
> The repetition kills the wretch at last.

Here he partly translates simply, partly amplifies—both weak of course, but he recovers himself by the vigour of his second line, which gives a notion of worn-out patience.

I broke off to read Gifford, and as I was carried along by the flow of his rhetorical passages, I became disgusted with myself; so I have just been reading my two last satires again to reassure myself, with tolerable success. There are fairly long reaches of quasi-rhetoric in each, in which I think I show movement, and on the whole I find I give myself something of the notion of Horace. But a good deal of it has been far from easy work. It certainly would be worth while translating Horace, *if* he can be translated, for only a translation can give Horace as Horace. Horace as Pope is a different thing; you think of the points in which Pope as a man did (or did not) resemble Horace, but you don't think of Horace as a man. 1¼ A.M.—I must go to bed.

To A. O. Prickard, Esq.

August 5, 1869.

By the way, you will be amused at an ingenious misprint in the proof of 'Ibam forte viâ sacrâ.' I had written—

> 'Tis a Jews' fast to-day:
> Affront a sect so touchy? Nay, friend, nay.'
> 'Faith, I've no scruples.' 'Ah! but I've a few—
> I'm weak, you know, and do as others do.'

The printer *ex ingenio* emended, 'Ah! but I'm a Jew.' . . . . Who is the resident at Winchester who communicates to the *Times* his experience about bathing with a dog? History has repeated itself more nearly than he would have people think, as I had an experience twenty-nine years ago still more like the story which he tries to cap, being half drowned by a dog that jumped in after me at Rugby, and tried to drag me to shore, when I was swimming in perfect comfort; but then, it did not occur to me to write to the *Times*. I remember poor Cotton quoted, 'Invitum qui servat idem facit occidenti.'

I hope to try, at any rate, to know your young friend when he comes up, but for the last two or three years I have not taken so much hold on New College as aforetime. Perhaps as I get older I lean more to the Graces than to the Muses—and yet I hardly know that I can say that—but the modern Muses are apt to be rather like Courthope's Cornelia.

To W. J. Courthope, Esq.

Scarborough, August 23, 24, 1869.

As you anticipate, I am not willing to accept all the flattering unction you give my Æneid, though I am, of course, pleased by what you say. I think I see plainly that such canons of criticism, if pushed a little further, would make short work of all translation; and I am not minded to confess the inutility of an art which I have practised so much during the last seven years. If Dryden and Pope really are the last word on the subject, 'cadit quæstio.' You can never have a good translation, unless the natural language of the period in which the translation is made is analogous to that of the period in which the original was written. Homer had his one real chance in England in the Elizabethan period and lost it. I have always clung to the hope that a writer of our period might be able, to a certain extent, to reproduce the style of another, just as he may enter into it thoroughly as a reader; so that, granting sufficient force on his part, he may hope to please not only the critic but the general reader, that is, if such general reader knows anything beyond the literature of his own time. One of my quarrels with Lord Derby is that he has translated an archaic poem into the language of the nineteenth century; one of my quarrels with the English hexameter is that it has no literary associations at all, but simply belongs to the time at which it happens to be written. All this, I dare say, is delusion; but I am not inclined to surrender it just yet, merely to save the credit of my Æneid.

I am reading very skimmingly the 'Ring and the Book,' which Strachan happens to have with him. There is infinite ability about it, quantities of subtle thought cleverly expressed—a good deal which I suppose is natural, not a little which is really poetical as well as ingenious or profound—yet it certainly seems to me ability misapplied. I have no great belief in the possibility of striking out new types in poetry; old types, no doubt, may be so manipulated in detail as to have the effect of new; witness the difference between the modern and the ancient drama; but in the main old types represent what poetical experience has proved to be possible, and an attempt to strike out anything beyond or by the side of them in poetry seems to be a mistake. I remember remarking the same thing to you this time last year about the 'Spanish Gipsy,' which seems to me to be a hybrid between the epic and the drama. The 'Ring and the Book' I

suppose is an attempt to create a new dramatic species, what may be called a number of monologues bound together by a common purpose. I cannot say that I think the gain is sufficient to justify the deviation from received forms. The story is not worth viewing in all these different relations, the different relations are by no means all equally important, and yet, for artistic purposes, they have to be all treated as if they were so; each occupies a book, and takes up something like the same number of lines. Then I think Browning's dramatic method is a mistake. Scarcely one of the speakers could be imagined really to say what he is made to say; no one, however rambling, would go off at so many tangents in talking, much less in pleading or making a statement. What it really resembles is thinking aloud, such thought being expressed not as the thinker would express it in his own unassisted way, but by the help of a clever interpreter. That is my judgment of the work: I must look back at some of the reviewers to see whether they agree with me. Some would doubtless tell me I ought to take what is given me and be thankful, not grumble that it is not something else; but I cannot consent to let criticism surrender at discretion in this way, and, till better instructed, I shall persist in regretting that a man who could do so much, should spoil what he does by waywardness and eccentricity.

To A. O. Prickard, Esq.

Boston, September 4, 1869.

I have been reading the 'Ring and the Book' very skimmingly, yet I think I have arrived at something like a critical judgment of it. I don't think the plan a very happy one in itself, though it is ingenious enough. With the execution of the plan I quarrel a good deal. The speeches are not really speeches, but thinkings aloud; no one ever rambles so much in talk as all Browning's personages do; while on the other hand no one ever thinks aloud meaning to be overheard. These people follow out, not the thoughts which really occur to them, as they would if they were thinking to themselves, but the thoughts which they wish their readers to think occur to them. Surely this is a fatal blunder, destroying all dramatic effect. Again, though the speakers are made to differ a good deal from each other in what they say, they are all of them intellectual and subtle—you wonder at their powers of analysis and exposition—which again is undramatic, as, granted that three or

four of them might be people of that calibre, it is to the last degree unlikely that all would be so. Again, I doubt whether the story itself is sufficiently considerable to bear being regarded from all these different points of view. Suppose one had the story of the Agamemnon told by the chorus, and by one of Ægisthus' λοχῖται, and by Clytemnestra, and by one of her waiting-maids, and by the ghost of Agamemnon, and by the ghost of Cassandra, and by Strophius, with a conclusion by Apollo, should not we rather tire of it? and yet it is surely the greater story of the two.

To the Rev. G. D. Boyle.

Boston, September 8, 1869.

. . . . I don't see how the Eucharistic doctrine can avoid being brought to some sharp issue. After all, the English Church *cannot* leave it an open question whether it differs from Transubstantiation by more than a verbal distinction. The utmost Pusey and Bennett can expect from a judicial decision must be that they will be left, like the Evangelicals in the Baptismal Controversy, just inside the Church, but not on its high road. I have been reading Coleridge's Keble aloud to my mother, and am rather dissatisfied with its tone on questions of the kind. Surely the simple fact is this—Keble when he wrote the Christian Year, whatever his tendencies may have been, had not formed definite views on various points; so he was able to produce a book with which the vast mass of Churchmen sympathised. Afterwards his views developed, and though he became dear to a party, he was less dear to the Church at large. Those who represent him now must choose one thing or the other; if they wish to conciliate general sympathy they must keep his later views in the background; if they set store by his later views, they must be content to abandon general sympathy.

It only remains to record the closing scene of this uneventful but busy life. For two or three years Conington's health had given his friends some slight uneasiness. Continued work, rather than overwork, had begun to tell on him; and he found himself at times suffering from headache, and a sense of oppression, the natural consequences of a too sedentary life, and of a mental activity too uninterrupted. But there was no symptom of any alarming kind; it seemed as if the simplest change in his

habits would be sufficient to restore him to full vigour; and it is probable that these slight indications of constitutional weakness had no connection with his sudden and fatal illness. He spent the Long Vacation of 1869, as usual, with his mother, and was described as having completely recovered his health and spirits, and as looking forward with pleasure to the recommencement of his work at the University. But just before he was to leave Boston for Oxford, a pimple appeared on his lip, which soon assumed all the deadly characters of a malignant pustule. His illness began on Friday, October 15, and did not appear to be serious until Wednesday night. On Thursday all hope of his recovery was over. The eminent surgeon, who was summoned from London to see him, and whose painful duty it was to confirm the worst fears of his friends, wrote to Oxford: 'I am on my way home from a sad visit to Boston, where I have left Professor Conington, apparently dying quickly. . . . He is the last son of his mother, who is a widow, blind, and past eighty. It would have been nearly the saddest sight I have ever seen, but for his calmness and resignation.' The whole truth was communicated without reserve to the sufferer, who even knew how many hours he had to live. As soon as some necessary business was done, he dismissed all earthly cares, and set himself to prepare for the immediate presence of death. Not in the remembrance of a life useful and innocent as his must be accounted among men, but only in the simplest teachings of his childhood could he find any comfort. And even as he listened anew to these, his mind was harassed by the terrible doubt, whether indeed they had any personal interest for him. While his consciousness remained unimpaired by the poison which was working in his blood, this state of anxiety and depression lasted; but those who watched by his bedside observed that it vanished at the first approach of the delirium which was to end in death. His utterances were now full of triumph; and, so long as any faint light of reason was left unquenched, his wandering words seemed to tell of a divine ecstasy. At one

time he would again and again repeat the lines, whence taken, none of the listeners knew—

> Now the vision is complete;
> That is the way they speak in heaven;

while again a little later his thoughts seemed to turn once more to earth, or at least to her who on earth was dearest to him—'There was God, and me, and my mother, and I was her guardian angel.' He breathed his last in the early morning of Saturday, October 23, and was buried on the following Tuesday by the side of his father and his brothers, in the churchyard at Fishtoft.

MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS

OF THE LATE

JOHN CONINGTON, M.A.

THE POETRY OF POPE.[1]

It is not my intention to attempt an investigation of any of the incidents in the life of Pope. Anyone who is acquainted with the discussions to which that biography has given rise, and has observed the proportions which they have lately assumed, as conducted in the book or the pamphlet, in the weekly newspaper or the bookseller's catalogue, will see that an independent judgment on their various details could scarcely be pronounced without a special study, not of months, but of years. Who were Pope's parents? Who was the Unfortunate Lady that he celebrates? Was he justified in his breach with Addison? What was his real share in the translation of the 'Odyssey'? What was his relation to the Misses Blount? What is the history of the publication of his 'Letters,' and how far did he tamper with them in preparing them for the press? Was the 'Dunciad' provoked or unprovoked? What was his quarrel with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and how far did he go in avenging himself? Did he mean to

[1] Reprinted from *Oxford Essays*, contributed by Members of the University, 1858.

satirise the Duke of Chandos? Can he be acquitted of disingenuousness in his correspondence with Aaron Hill? Was he bribed by the Duchess of Marlborough to suppress what he afterwards printed? How far was he to blame in the posthumous quarrel fastened on him by Bolingbroke? Such are some of the questions, of greater or less importance, which are sure to be raised by the casual reader, and not sure to be answered by the best-informed writer. Other literary men have been the subjects of equal or greater mystery as regards some single event or transaction in their lives. The cloud which rests on the birth of Savage is apparently still undispersed. If we now know Chatterton to have been his own Rowley, and Ireland his own Shakspeare, we are perhaps hardly in a condition to speak definitely of Macpherson as his own Ossian. But there is probably no English author whose life can be compared with Pope's, as a succession of petty secrets and third-rate problems. The fact itself is significant, and can scarcely fail to bias the opinions even of one who expressly absolves himself from forming a judgment on the particular points at issue. A man whose actions were generally blameless would not have left so many things for his apologist to explain. A man whose character was truthful and simple would not have been the hero of so many enigmatical narratives. I mention this in order to excuse myself, if, in making remarks on the poet, I occasionally imply a judgment on the man. My object is to produce a critical estimate of Pope's several poems in themselves, with some prefatory remarks on his poetry generally, in one of its relations to English literature; but the writings must necessarily bear some impress of the writer, and it is hardly possible to take a survey of the one which shall not reflect more or less definitely on the other.

That Pope is the most correct of English poets is a notion which of late years various eminent critics have been at considerable pains to explode. The opinion is one which has the advantage of prescription, having apparently been a received doctrine for many years after the poet's death. Yet, if a question can be decided by the authority of great names, it would seem necessary at once to abandon such a position. Hazlitt, in his 'Lectures on the English Poets,'[1] mentions particular instances of incorrectness which are to be found in Pope; and an article in the 'North British Review,' for August 1848, attributed to Mr. de Quincey, analyses one or two passages in the poems at considerable length, with a view to prove that the belief, in which it is admitted that the poet himself shared, is a gross popular error. Lord Macaulay, in his 'Essay on Byron,' is equally strenuous on the same side, though the ground which he takes up is somewhat different. According to him, what Pope and the post-Restoration poets aimed at and realised was not real correctness, which, with him, is synonymous with excellence and truthfulness to nature, but the pseudo-correctness of conformity to an utterly artificial and illusory standard. It appears to me, however, that the old view was substantially a just one, that there is a legitimate and intelligible sense in which Pope may be said to have especially earned the praise of correctness, and that this praise discriminates him, not only from his predecessors, but also to some extent from subsequent poets. The ideal which he laboured to attain was a reasonable one, and his efforts were sufficiently, though not wholly, successful. The question will, perhaps, be found to be partly a question of words; but the right understanding

[1] Page 148 (first edition). The whole lecture contains much discriminating criticism, frequently expressed in very felicitous language.

of it is, I think, important, if we wish really to appreciate the position which Pope occupies as a poet.

It is worthy of remark that, as the 'North British' Reviewer admits, correctness is a thing on which Pope is known to have especially valued himself. He had scarcely commenced authorship when it was placed before him by one of his earliest critical friends as the principal object after which he was bound to strive. 'Walsh,' he told Spence, 'used to encourage me much, and used to tell me that there was one way left of excelling; for, though we had several great poets, we never had any one great poet who was correct; and desired me to make that my study and aim.'[1] It is easy to smile at this criticism, and to ask what is the worth of a canon which thus summarily condemns Shakspeare, Spenser, and Milton as alike deficient in the particular requirement sought. These writers, it is now generally acknowledged, far transcend Pope in grandeur and comprehensiveness of conception; they have achieved triumphs of expression to which he was unequal, and struck chords of melody of which he never dreamed. Yet it is possible that he may have been conscious of something in himself which they had not, and possible, too, that this special acquirement may have been a thing of real and enduring value. That he and his contemporaries should have overrated it is only too likely; that they should have been altogether wrong in their estimate of its nature and importance is far from probable.

Perhaps there is no better help towards a true apprehension of the English poetry of the eighteenth century than a knowledge of the poetry of Augustan Rome. The similarity of the two periods, as phases of national literature, has often been pointed out: it would be easy, if

[1] Spence's *Anecdotes*, Malone's edition, p. 52.

this were the case, to pursue the parallel into detail. Now, it is curious that what Walsh said to Pope is precisely the same as what Horace said to his countrymen. He tells them, almost in so many words, that, though they had had several great poets, they never had any one great poet who was correct. Speaking of Roman genius, in its application to tragedy, he says:—

> Tentavit quoque rem si digne vertere posset,
> Et placuit sibi, natura sublimis et acer:
> Nam spirat tragicum satis, et feliciter audet,
> Sed turpem putat inscite metuitque lituram.[1]

In another passage he extends the censure to Roman poetry in general:—

> Nec virtute foret clarisve potentius armis
> Quam lingua Latium, si non offenderet unum
> Quemque poetarum limæ labor et mora. Vos O
> Pompilius sanguis, carmen reprehendite, quod non
> Multa dies et multa litura coercuit, atque
> Perfectum decies non castigavit ad unguem.[2]

What it was that Horace quarrelled with in the poetry of his predecessors may be seen more at length in those passages of his Satires where he speaks of Lucilius.[3] It was, in short, that they did not spend sufficient pains upon their poetry; that they did not make it as good as they might have done. Their treatment of a subject was not sufficiently varied; their language was not sufficiently elegant; their versification was not sufficiently polished. This may at first sight seem to be a charge not against the individual poets, but against the age in which they lived. Ennius and Lucilius may have been as laborious as Horace; Shakspeare and Spenser may have polished as assiduously

[1] 2 *Epist.* i. 164 foll. [2] *De Arte Poetica*, vv. 289 foll.
[3] *Satires* 4 and 10 of Book i.

as Pope; and any superiority in finish that may be conceded to the later poet may be simply owing to his having had the advantage of living after the earlier. But it will commonly be found that the necessity of careful elaboration, though implicitly recognised more or less by every one who practises composition as an art, is not strongly felt in the earlier periods of literature. In such times a man of genius speaks at once, out of the fulness of his own ebullient heart, or in the fervour of his admiration of the great writers of another age and country: he is eager to communicate what he has felt and read, rather than solicitous about the manner in which the communication should be made. So, if I may borrow an humbler illustration from the childhood of the individual, it is hard to teach a boy to labour at his composition beyond a certain point; he may feel that his verses are inferior to a classical model, but it is utterly incomprehensible to him how by any expenditure of time he should be able to make them better. As a matter of fact, we find Horace distinctly asserting that Lucilius thought more of quantity than of quality; the old bard, he tells us, considered it a great feat to pour out two hundred verses in an hour *stans pede in uno*; at the same time that he bore witness against himself by laughing at the verses of Attius and Ennius as less correct than his own. Even if we had no express testimony on the subject, what we know of the pre-Augustan poets would certainly lead us to think that they were inferior to their successors in the labour which they bestowed upon their pieces. Let us hear how Mr. de Quincey, in one of his acknowledged writings, decides the question as between Horace and Lucretius:[1]—

> The *curiosa felicitas* of Horace in his lyric composition, the

[1] *Sketches, Critical and Biographic*, pp. 271, 273.

elaborate delicacy of workmanship in his thoughts and in his style, argue a scale of labour that, as against any equal number of lines in Lucretius, would measure itself by months against days. There are single odes in Horace that must have cost him a six-weeks' seclusion. . . . . Let the proportions of power between Horace and Lucretius be what they may, the proportions of labour are absolutely incommensurable; in Horace the labour was *directly* as the power, in Lucretius *inversely* as the power.

If we compare Virgil with his hexametrical predecessors, the result is the same. Take any paragraph in Lucretius, or in the 'Peleus and Thetis' of Catullus; there may, perhaps, be some conceptions there which Virgil's less vigorous genius could not have entertained, some daring felicities of language which his more timid judgment would have rejected; but what remains will be seen to be characterised by a carelessness and want of art, both in style and versification, to which they yielded, but over which he triumphed. We can imagine, that if by any chance the first draft of any part of Virgil's poems had been preserved, we should find traces of prosaic redundancy in expression and monotonous uniformity in metre which would remind us forcibly of Lucretius. On the other hand, it is difficult to conceive that the 'De Rerum Natura,' as we now have it, could have been produced by a man who even in his own time realised the ideal which Horace has so well described,[1] sitting down to write in the spirit of a candid censor, removing undignified words from their place in the language of poetry, retrenching luxuriant redundancies, softening harshnesses, and exhibiting the plastic flexibility of a well-trained performer of several parts. This was the service which the great writers of the Augustan age rendered to the poetry of their country.

[1] 2 *Epist.* ii. 109 foll.

If we cannot give them the praise which, in a different application, was bestowed on their master, and say that where they found brick they left marble, we may say that where they found a rough-hewn and rudely-carved block they left a finished statue. They may have done injustice to their materials by cutting away more than was needed; but they were the first workmen who showed their countrymen that they knew the more delicate uses of the chisel.

Such a metaphor would, of course, convey a very exaggerated notion of what was done for English poetry by Pope. The difference between him and his predecessors would be more nearly represented by one of Dr. Johnson's tropes,[1] which contrasts a genius cutting a Colossus from a rock with an artist carving heads on cherry-stones. The excellences of the school of English poetry which came in with the Restoration appear to sink into absolute insignificance compared with that utterly incommensurable with anything known or surmised to have existed in republican Rome, which gave form and spirit to the poetry of the preceding century. Yet what has been said of the Augustan poets is substantially true of those whom I have fixed on as their English representatives, and of Pope in particular. Even Shakspeare, if we analyse him calmly, cannot be said to have the characteristics of a finished writer. It is true that his obedience to the eternal laws of truth and beauty was infinitely more comprehensive in its range, infinitely higher in its quality, than Pope's. But it is no less true that there are rules of style and versification, not arbitrary, but grounded on those very laws, which Shakspeare neglected and Pope observed. We know, in fact, that Shakspeare's habits of composition were unfavourable to the attainment of that faultless propriety

[1] Boswell, vol. viii. p. 306 (Croker's ed. 1835).

which is the reward of long-continued labour. Pope, as was to be expected, has noted this in his imitation of one of those passages from Horace which I quoted in the last paragraph:[1]—

> Otway failed to polish or refine,
> And fluent Shakspeare scarce effaced a line:
> E'en copious Dryden wanted, or forgot,
> That last and greatest art, the art to blot.

What is to be said of such expressions as '*reverbs* no hollowness,' '*exsufflicate* and blowed surmises,' where a word is formed, in contempt of analogy, more gross than when Lucretius talks of *differitas* for *differentiâ*, *pestilitas* for *pestilentia*? If we turn to the passages where Shakspeare and Pope may properly be brought into comparison, the rhyming couplets in the plays, the minor poems, and the sonnets, can it be maintained that there is no weakness, no redundance, such as might have been avoided by an exacting self-criticism? The last stanza of the 'Rape of Lucrece' will give an instance of what I mean:—

> When they had sworn to this advised doom,
> They did conclude to bear dead Lucrece thence,
> To show her bleeding body thorough Rome,
> And so to publish Tarquin's foul offence:
> Which being done with speedy diligence,
> The Romans plausibly did give consent
> To Tarquin's everlasting banishment.

This is, of course, no fair specimen of the beauties of the poem; but even were it more exceptional than it is, it would still illustrate the proposition that its author is frequently unequal to himself. There is something not ineffective in the monotony of the lines and the simplicity of the expression; but it can hardly be doubted that the

[1] Book ii. ep. i. vv. 278 foll.

one might have been varied and the other rendered less prosaic, without striking a note out of harmony with the natural conclusion of a story so melancholy. '*Did* conclude,' '*did* give consent,' were too common in Shakspeare's time to offend a critical reader; but Pope surely did good service in expelling them, by precept and ridicule,[1] from the ordinary language of poetry. 'Which being done with speedy diligence,' may remind us of the prosaic style—half oratorical, half conversational—in which Lucretius is apt to pass from sentence to sentence. Altogether, the passage does not seem to conform to Coleridge's definition of poetry, which is at bottom much the same as the demand for correctness, 'the *best* words in their right places.' The language and metre of Spenser will still less bear to be examined strictly according to such rules as a modern critic is accustomed to recognise. There are, I need not say, innumerable instances of felicitous diction and musical versification; but our feeling for both is apt to be overpowered by the general sense of redundance on the one hand, and of long-drawn uniformity on the other. It is doubtless this sense that even in our day, when the appreciation of the elder poetry has so greatly revived, prevents his writings from enjoying anything that can fairly be called popularity. Of Milton it is far more difficult to speak. His blank verse unquestionably shows marks of an art more ex-

[1] 'Another nicety is in relation to expletives, whether words or syllables, which are made use of purely to supply a vacancy. *Do*, before verbs plural, is absolutely such, and it is not improbable that future refiners may explode *did* and *does* in the same manner, which are almost always used for the sake of rhyme.' (Pope to Walsh—Bowles, vol. vii. p. 75.) So the well-known 'Expletives their feeble aid do join,' of the *Essay on Criticism*. The ridicule of expletives, like that of the lines of ten monosyllables, is taken from a passage in Dryden's *Essay on Dramatic Poesy*, as Malone remarks; the expletives, however, which Dryden singles out for censure are 'for to,' and 'unto.'

quisite, though less obvious, than that which Pope employed in the elaboration of the rhyming heroic. So far, however, the two cannot be said to be on common ground. It was one of the characteristics of the poetry which came in with the Restoration—a characteristic doubtless attributable to the French affinities of the school—that it discouraged the cultivation of blank verse. Rhyming tragedies, indeed, did not long remain the fashion; but those which succeeded them cannot be classed among the most successful poems of their time. Dryden might express his regret that he had chosen rhyme for his translation of Virgil,[1] and Pope might select blank verse for an epic which never was written; but such afterthoughts cannot be accepted in contradiction of the testimony of a whole poetical life. Of the blank-verse poems which that school produced, only two—Thomson's 'Seasons,' and Young's 'Night Thoughts'—are much known to the readers of the present day; and no one will pretend that, as blank verse, they have any points of superiority to the great Miltonic master-works. On the other hand, in rhyme Milton can hardly be said to have put forth his strength, though what he has done—if we except his more juvenile pieces—certainly shows felicity of execution, as well as force of imagination. On the whole, however, Milton lived too much in an atmosphere of his own, too little in sympathy with the generation in which his greatest works were produced, to impart to English poetry that correctness of which it was beginning to find its need. He might have led it by a steeper and more rugged way to a higher point of exaltation; but other

[1] The story rests on the authority of the elder Richardson, who heard it from the person to whom Dryden made this confession, 'a north-country gentleman,' supposed to be Sir Wilfred Lawson.—See Scott's *Life of Dryden*, p. 351, ed. 1834.

guides were preferred, and it was not till they had had their day that his influence came to be really felt. These writers were, as might be expected, themselves incumbered more or less, especially at first, with the faults of carelessness and roughness, against which it is their praise to have protested. As compared with Pope, Dryden is certainly an incorrect poet. He is full of inequalities—at one time polished and vigorous, at another flat and slovenly. Yet his felicities are of a kind which can hardly have been attained without some use of the file, some conscious imitation of classical models. As a prose writer, he may perhaps be called the father of English criticism; and it is not likely that his practice should have been uninfluenced by his precepts. In his 'Defence of the Essay on Dramatic Poesy,' he says of himself,

> As for the more material faults of writing which are properly mine, though I see many of them, I want leisure to amend them. It is enough for those who make one poem the business of their lives to leave that correct; yet, excepting Virgil, I never met with any which was so in any language.

It is of this spirit of criticism that Pope's poetry is the triumphant embodiment. He appears to have been the first English writer possessed of high poetical power (Milton I have already intimated that I should wish to except) who addressed himself to the composition of poetry with the full determination to do his best. He occasionally published poems which he afterwards found himself able to improve; that, so far from proving that he acquiesced in imperfection, is really an evidence to the contrary: but we may be sure that he never published his first draft.[1] Even in his most finished pieces

[1] 'The only poems which can be supposed to have been written with such regard to the times as might hasten their publication, were the two satires of "Thirty-eight," of which Dodsley told me that they were brought

there may be occasionally something that more study might have mended—an ill-turned thought, an inaccurate expression, a bad rhyme. So much may be readily conceded to those who, like Hazlitt and Mr. de Quincey, think the praise of his correctness exaggerated. But are there no blemishes of a similar kind in writers who are commonly allowed in these respects to come little short of perfection—in Virgil or Horace, for example? The point is not that Pope was universally correct, but that correctness, in the sense in which I have attempted to explain it, was at any rate one of his leading characteristics, and that the instances of carelessness which can be quoted from his works are not sufficiently numerous or important to disturb the general impression. Nor do I think it can be maintained that such a praise is slight or nugatory. It is the praise which is given to a schoolboy for a good exercise; but it goes along also with that schooling to which a wise man will be willing to submit all his life. If we ignore it, we must ignore nearly the whole of what criticism has done for literary composition from the days of Horace downwards. It must, perhaps, be admitted that this zeal for correctness operates on the higher functions of the poet rather negatively than positively, rather by restraining him from an untrue or exaggerated conception than by suggesting others of greater reality or beauty. Such is doubtless the tendency of all endeavours to act by rule, though there may seem no sufficient reason why the fear of failure should not act as a stimulus to the attainment of success. But if the patient pursuit of excellence is not uniformly

to him by the author that they might be fairly copied. "Almost every line," he said, "was then written twice over. I gave him a clean transcript, which he sent some time afterwards to me for the press, with almost every line written twice over a second time." '—Johnson, *Lives of the Poets* (Cunningham's edition), vol. iii. p. 114.

rewarded in the wider circles of poetical activity, it meets with its recompense in the narrower. In avoiding minor faults, the poet is led on to perceive and appropriate minor beauties. There, at all events, the result of an exacting self-criticism is not barrenness, but increased fertility. The mind rejects many thoughts, but only that it may produce others of a higher and rarer quality. The conception may be inadequate, but it is adequately represented; and as it has to be represented by the aid of subordinate and ancillary conceptions, there is still room for the presence of that seeing and shaping power, without which poetry can scarcely be said to exist. It is quite possible that a poet of this class, in refining his country's language and versification, may cast away much that is at least of equal value with what he preserves, simply because he has not the insight to perceive its latent capabilities. He may close his eyes to the complex graces of Shakspearian diction, and regard the varieties of Miltonic rhythm as things forbidden. Even then, however, it may be doubted whether he does not gain far more than he loses by these self-imposed restraints. To expect that the taste of such a man will be infallible, teaching him always, or even generally, what to take and what to leave, would be to expect more than is authorised by our knowledge of human nature. It is enough that he acquires himself, and leads others to acquire, the habit of judging according to fixed rules—that he puts an end to an anarchy which, though harmless while the national mind is in a state of comparative unconsciousness, becomes pernicious as soon as it is felt and recognised. Such, at any rate, is one of the stages through which it would seem that the poetical literature of a nation must ordinarily pass. It may be only the prelude to a final decay of creative power; but

even then it is entitled to the respectful consideration of the critic or the literary historian, not only as a legitimate development of previous conditions of the national mind, but for the sake of its own intrinsic worth.

If this view of Pope's position be the true one, it need not surprise us that no subsequent writer should be found to dispute with him the boasted pre-eminence in correctness. That a period like that which his poetry symbolises should be short-lived is only what experience would lead us to expect. The Athenian drama, as a work not of genius but of self-conscious art, attained its culminating point in Sophocles, and its subsequent development, though full of significance and promise in relation to dramatic literature generally, was in itself undoubtedly a corruption. Virgil and Horace are the sole representatives of that perfection of poetic style which is commonly associated with the Augustan age; in Ovid the declension has already begun; melodious versification has passed into unvarying smoothness, and polish of language into epigram and antithesis. The writers who succeeded Pope attempted to pursue the same course of refinement, but they had not the same true instinct to guide them, and the material which they strove to elaborate gave way under their hands. They either repeated the more obvious features of his language and his rhythm, or, in endeavouring to improve upon them, ran into that excess which it was the very object of his chastened taste to restrain. A spirit of reaction became apparent: Churchill endeavoured to return to the negligent vigour of Dryden; Cowper, Churchill's schoolfellow and admirer, went further, not only making the heroic couplet less mellifluous, but reviving the fashion of blank-verse writing, which he learned to use as it had not been used by Thomson or Young; till at last the springs of new life

in taste and opinion which arose in the great political convulsion of those days burst up to the surface, and the literary traditions of a century and a half were submerged or swept away. Since then it may be almost said that correctness such as Pope's is to be numbered among the lost arts; the leaders of the revolution, like Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Keats, disdained it as the badge of an unimaginative and artificial school; the Conservatives, like Rogers and Campbell, were scarcely strong enough to realise in practice what they upheld in theory; while Byron, who, as Lord Macaulay happily remarks, belonged to both parties, not by turns but simultaneously, bears probably more marks of slovenliness and haste than any great poet of the time. But the importance of form in poetry is not a doctrine which can long be lost sight of while any feeling for art survives; and though the circumstantial differences between Mr. Tennyson and Pope are too many and too great to justify any parallel of the one with the other, we may rejoice in the possession of a writer whose self-criticism is as exacting as Pope's own, and who has taught us once more that high poetry will not lightly tolerate a trivial phrase or a tuneless line.

I now proceed to notice Pope's several poems, classifying them, as nearly as may be, according to the order in which they appeared.

I. '*The Pastorals.*'

It seems at one time to have been considered a natural thing that a young poet should make his *début* by writing pastorals. This notion was supposed to find its justification in the example of Virgil, who represents himself as a shepherd warned by Phœbus to

abstain from heroic song and be content with meditating the woodland muse while feeding his flocks. Virgil, however, if not a shepherd, was certainly a countryman during the early part of his life; and though his rural pictures are mere fancy pieces, where the scenes portrayed, so far as they are pastoral at all, are as much Sicilian as Italian, no very violent allegory was involved in this mode of describing the condition from which he was raised by his patron's favour. But the fiction was taken up by men whose circumstances had as little in common with Virgil's as Virgil's had with those of the shepherds whom he professed to personate. Spenser introduces his 'little booke' to Sir Philip Sidney as the offspring of 'a shepheard's swaine, all as his straying flocke he fedde;' and the commendatory epistle addressed to Gabriel Harvey says that therein he followed 'the example of the best and most ancient poets, which devised this kinde of writing, being so base for the matter and homely for the maner, at the first to trie their habilities.' And Philips, Pope's rival, in expressing his wonder that, 'in an age so addicted to the Muses, pastoral poetry comes to be never so much as thought of,' reminds his contemporaries that 'Virgil and Spenser made use of it as a prelude to epic poetry.' Johnson has perhaps gone nearer to the truth when he suggests[1] that the utter unlikeness of the pastoral Arcadia to anything in real life would naturally recommend it as an easy subject of composition to those who had had no experience of real life themselves. Pope, however, in his after years, was pleased to think[2] that he had done just what Virgil says of himself—trying his boyish hand on an epic, and then turning to pastoral poetry as his first serious work.

[1] *Lives of the Poets*, Cunningham's edition, vol. iii. p. 116. Compare vol. ii. p. 297.

[2] Spence's *Anecdotes*, Malone's edition, p. 49.

It is not surprising that Pope's 'Pastorals' should have been received at the time of their appearing with almost unbounded favour. His friendly correspondent Walsh,[1] in language which, to persons acquainted with the life of the Roman poet, will seem either an unmeaning truism or a blunder, observed that it was no flattery at all to say that Virgil had written nothing so good at his age: the critic might have said, with as little fear of being thought a flatterer, that no English poet, old or young, had produced anything bearing such proofs of finish in its language and its versification. Further than that commendation cannot fairly go; but it may well seem wonderful that such powers should have been exhibited by a boy of sixteen. Yet it would be a great mistake to suppose that Pope's 'Pastorals' are worthy of being mentioned in the same day with any genuine work of Virgil's. A comparison of any one of the English pastorals with any one of the 'Eclogues' would soon show where the difference lies. It is not merely that Pope appears throughout as the imitator of Virgil, the copyist of one who is himself a copyist; the disparity is shown not in the greater or less degree of imitation, but in the manner of imitating. Virgil transcribes Theocritus with a fidelity which makes him sometimes appear confused and unskilful; but all the while there are under-currents of thought and feeling which are peculiarly his own. The image which he uses may be trite, but you can trace in it some subtle relation,

[1] Walsh to Wycherley, in Bowles' *Pope*, vol. vii. p. 60. It used to be supposed that Walsh was the author of the *Life of Virgil* and the preface to the *Pastorals* prefixed to Dryden's translation. Malone, however (*Life of Dryden*, vol. i. of *Prose Works*, p. 232), on the authority of Dryden's letters to Tonson, attributes them to Dr. Knightley Chetwood, afterwards Dean of Gloucester. Walsh's pastoral eclogue on Mrs. Tempest (for which see Tonson's *Miscellany*, vol. v.) supplied something more than the general thought to Pope's fourth pastoral.

if not to the subject treated of, at least to the poet's mind. So there is an artificial delicacy of texture about his language which defies analysis. In Pope, on the contrary, the results are obvious—they can be understood and appreciated at once. We are astonished at the skill which has enabled him to command and produce them; but they do not themselves astonish us, though they give us sufficient pleasure. He has not indeed exhausted the subject of his own versification in his letter to Walsh (the sixth and last of the series); but he tells us, at any rate, part of the secret of his success, and we feel the difference between a secret and a mystery. Nor did he approach nearer to Virgil when six years later he appeared as the poet of the Messiah. He had the language of Jewish prophecy at his disposal, and he has translated it into classical equivalents, which are marshalled into sonorous lines. But he has missed the art which underlies the 'Pollio'—the art which makes the regenerating change in the order of nature proceed step by step with the progress of the child from infancy to maturity, each event being at once a stage in the gradual emancipation of the universe, and a tribute specially appropriate to the young deliverer.

A few words may be said about the controversy between Pope and Philips. The pastorals of the latter are probably best known through the celebrated article in the 'Guardian,'[1] if indeed they can be said to be known at all; but there was a time[2] when Pope thought them deserving of a more favourable notice. So far as the theory of pastoral poetry is concerned, a modern reader will most likely give the victory to Philips. If shepherd life is to be written about at all, it seems clear that the proper style for it is the simpler style, not the more artificial. But

[1] *Guardian*, No. xl. [2] Pope to Cromwell, Bowles, vol. ii. p. 136.

Philips' attempts to realise simplicity are not always satisfactory. Where his language deviates from that of ordinary poetry, it generally becomes not rustic, but obsolete. His model is not the English of the rural districts of his own day, but the English of Spenser; and in the names of his *dramatis personæ* Hobbinol, Cuddy, and Colin Clout are strangely mingled with Myco and Menalcas. On the other hand, in the structure of his poems, he follows not Spenser, but Theocritus and Virgil; his shepherds not only talk in heroics, but sing in the same metre; so that, in fact, it is only by a conventional fiction that they can be said to sing at all. Thus anyone who takes the trouble to peruse his pastorals will probably pronounce them to be compositions of the same class with Pope's, but of course infinitely inferior. Those, however, who read Gay's 'Shepherd's Week' with pleasure as a natural picture of rustic life,[1] may, I think, extend some of their approbation to the poet whom Gay was employed to parody. If Philips, while endeavouring to be natural, has omitted the coarser features of shepherds' society, Gay has run, as he intended to run, into the opposite extreme. Gay's style is as conventional as Philips', and if the workhas any merit beyond that of a clever burlesque, it is as representing the same life in a lighter aspect which Philips has described more sentimentally.

II. *The 'Essay on Criticism.'*

Pope had already given some proof of his judgment and knowledge as a critic in a 'Discourse on Pastoral Poetry,'

[1] 'But the effect of reality and truth became conspicuous, even when the intention was to show them grovelling and degraded. These pastorals became popular, and were read with delight as just representations of rural manners and occupations by those who had no interest in the rivalry of the poets, nor knowledge of the critical dispute.'—Johnson's *Lives*, vol. ii. p. 285.

prefixed to his 'Pastorals'—an essay which has received high and not wholly undeserved praise. Like all Pope's more serious prose compositions, it is written with elegance, though with some stiffness; and if his precepts are drawn not from nature, but from the most artificial specimens of an artificial school, the fault must rest mainly with the authorities from whom he borrowed them. There were not wanting precedents for his next attempt, a didactic poem on poetical criticism. Four poems of this sort, three of them by patrons of Pope's, had been produced within a short period previously—Sheffield's 'Essays on Satire and on Poetry,' Roscommon's 'Essay on Translated Verse,' and Granville's 'Essay on Unnatural Flights in Poetry;' and the poem to which they doubtless owed their impulse, Boileau's 'Art of Poetry,' had appeared in an English version, to which Dryden was known to have lent a helping hand. We might have expected that Dryden himself, so eminent as a prose critic, and so didactic in the style of his poetry, would have undertaken a similar work; and indeed there are many of his occasional poems, prologues and epilogues, and epistles to friends, which may not unfairly be classed under this head. Pope had prepared himself for the task, as he told Spence,[1] by devouring as a boy all the best critical works that came in his way; and his early letters show that when he read the poetry of his predecessors he read it as a critic. Spence is the authority for a statement,[2] once questioned by Johnson, but surely possessing intrinsic probability, that the essay was originally written in prose; and those who would examine it must subject it to something like the reverse process, and turn it back into prose again. As a preceptive work, its merits have, I think, been exaggerated. Johnson certainly goes too far when

[1] Malone's *Spence*, p. 49. [2] Ibid. p. 3.

he says that it 'displays such extent of comprehension, such nicety of distinction, such acquaintance with mankind, and such knowledge both of ancient and modern learning, as are not often attained by the maturest age and the longest experience.' Without endorsing Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's vindictive assertion [1] that it is 'all stolen,' we may question whether there are many of the precepts which might not be traced to their source in some earlier writer. That a boy should be able to master and appropriate criticism of the dogmatic and conventional sort—and the essay can hardly be said to have advanced beyond this—is not surprising. Johnson's own 'Lives' are precisely the book which an intelligent schoolboy may appreciate and make his own. So again, worldly remarks on life and manners may be picked up at second-hand and retailed by one who has had no reason to find them true. As to the method, no one but Warburton ever pretended that the essay was thoroughly systematic, though Pope himself appears to have censured the absence of a regular plan in the work which is the prototype of his and all similar attempts, Horace's 'Art of Poetry.' [2] Warburton admits that many of the directions are as much addressed to poets as to critics; but though he shows without difficulty that the arts of poetry and criticism are cognate subjects, he does not prove the poem to be regular. When we come to examine the execution, we find much that can only be called commonplace. In the first two paragraphs, for example (eighteen lines), there is nothing remarkable but the witty comparison of judgments to watches. These short pointed illustrations constitute, in fact, one main source of the attractiveness of the poem; but they are not always equally happy, and they are not scattered about in any great profusion. They furnish a sufficient

[1] Malone's *Spence*, p. 30.

[2] Spence.

number of lines for quotation to keep the essay in the mouths of men, if not in their minds; but they are rather foreshadowings of that eminence which Pope was to attain as a sparkling and epigrammatic writer than actual contributions towards it. To a modern reader probably the acceptability of the poem rests chiefly on those longer passages which elaborate versification and a certain elevation of sentiment are evidently intended to lift above the level of the rest. Such are the tribute to the great classic poets which concludes the first part, the comparison of progress in learning to the ascent of the Alps, the reflection on the short duration of modern poetry, the lines on the revival of learning, and the apostrophe to Walsh with which the poem is brought to an end. Yet it may be doubted whether any of them approaches the beauty of that digression in Horace, almost the only thing of the kind in the 'Ars Poetica,'[1] where an observation on the mutability of language is drawn, though but for a moment, into a general moral. There is, however, one passage in the essay which is worthy of higher praise than any of those which I have enumerated. I allude of course to the famous lines where keen and graceful ridicule of common faults in versification is followed by an enforcement and exemplification of the doctrine that the sound should seem an echo to the sense, and the whole culminates in an eulogy of Dryden's magnificent 'Ode on the Power of Music.' Johnson has attempted to break down the doctrine of representative harmony by a rigorous examination of Pope's endeavours to produce the effect of swiftness and slowness. But in the lines where he has, as he says, set the numbers used in describing the labour of Sisyphus to

[1] *A. P.* vv. 60 foll.

another sense, the numbers are not really the same;[1] and he forgets, too, that a poet is not bound to produce a line where the sound of the words shall tell its own tale quite irrespectively of the sense, but only one where the sound will assist the impression which the sense is already making. Whether, as he asserts elsewhere, there is no particular heaviness, obstruction, or delay in the lines which mention the effort of Ajax, is a question for the ear; and the ear too will, I think, decide that there is a reason why a line, constructed so as to be pronounced rapidly, will give an additional notion of speed if it happens to be an Alexandrine. Altogether, the passage is an eminently happy instance of criticism conveyed in a delicate artistic form, and passing into poetry of a higher, though not the highest, sort. The only drawback to its excellence is the

[1] Pope's lines are—

> With many a weary step, and many a groan,
> Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone:
> The huge round stone, resulting with a bound,
> Thunders impetuous down, and smokes along the ground.

Johnson's parody is—

> While many a merry tale and many a song
> Cheered the rough road, we wished the rough road long:
> The rough road then, returning in a round,
> Mocked our impatient steps—for all was fairy ground.

It is obvious to remark that 'merry' has a much less tedious sound than 'weary;' that the sense of panting occasioned by the five aspirates in Pope's second line is not analogous to anything in Johnson's; and that 'thunders impetuous,' which is nearly equivalent to two dactyls, has a more rapid movement than 'mocked our impatient.'

The Eleventh Book of the *Odyssey* was translated by Broome; Pope, however, speaks of the lines as his own, having perhaps made them so by alteration. The last line is taken from one of Dryden's plusquam-Alexandrines in his version of the end of the Third Book of *Lucretius*.

> What is it but, in reason's true account,
> To heave the stone against the rising mount,
> Which urged, and laboured, and forced up with pain,
> Recoils, and rolls impetuous down, and smokes along the plain?

resemblance of the last line to another in the poem which occurs exactly a hundred lines later. Two such verses as —'And what Timotheus was is Dryden now,' and 'And such as Chaucer is shall Dryden be'—ought not to have occurred in a single composition of no immeasurable length.

On the whole, while the 'Essay on Criticism' may be readily allowed to be superior in execution, as it certainly is in compass, to any work of a similar nature in English poetry, it can hardly be said to redeem the class of didactic poems on æsthetics from the neglect into which it has now fallen, or to make us regret that the critical ability of our own day should prefer to follow the path which Dryden marked out when he chose to discourse of poetry in his own vigorous and flexible prose.

III. *The Lyric Poems.*

If there is any kind of composition which Pope can be said to have cultivated without success, it is lyric poetry. His minor pieces, indeed, such as the boyish 'Ode to Solitude,' are not unpleasing; and the 'Dying Christian to his Soul' might, perhaps, call for some praise, in spite of its utter conventionality, if the verses, which, as he tells his correspondent Steele, came to him the first moment he waked in the morning, had not presented themselves in the borrowed plumes of Flatman. But it was in an evil hour that he listened to the entreaties of the same correspondent, at that time probably busied in the management of a public concert, and accepted the perilous service of writing an 'Ode for St. Cecilia's Day.' The result is a poem which, as Gray justly observes, is not worthy of so great a master. While challenging comparison but too evidently with the unapproached grandeur of Dryden's

second ode, it hardly rises to the height of the first and much slighter effort, and is perhaps less pleasing than the forgotten attempt of Congreve. The opening stanza is an experiment in imitative versification, which succeeds where it is confined to the iambic or trochaic rhythm, but fails when it passes into a different measure. What harmony can be extracted from lines like these:—

> Let the loud trumpet sound
> Till the roofs all around
> The shrill echoes rebound,

which are evidently meant to run in the same measure, but really oscillate between two distinct rhythms, the cretic and the anapæstic? or can an ear which has been accustomed to the unforced flow of Moore's anapæstic dimeters (metrical questions can hardly be treated with precision except in a pedantic terminology), find any pleasure in such cadences as the following:—

> Exulting in triumph now swell the bold notes,
> In broken air trembling the wild music floats?

Johnson remarks that the second stanza consists of hyperbolical commonplaces; he might have added that some of them are peculiarly unhappy, as anticipating in the comparatively weak language of metaphor the images which appear a stanza or two afterwards in the bolder form of personifying fable. When we are told that 'Melancholy lifts her head, Listening Envy drops her snakes,' the effect is to prevent any vivid impression which we might have received from the dancing spectres and listening Furies in the story of Orpheus. The conclusion of the third stanza is musical, and there is vigour of expression in the line 'And men grew heroes at the sound;' but the images are again trite. The stanzas about Orpheus and Eurydice, with their 'Dreadful gleams, Dismal screams, Fires that

glow, Shrieks of woe,' their iteration of Virgil's thoughts in numbers which, if sometimes marked by melancholy sweetness, too often affect a rapidity of movement which is simply grotesque and undignified, have just now been characterised, not more strongly than they deserve, by the author of 'Merope.' It is curious that Johnson should consider the form perfect and lay all the blame on the matter, as if the sorrows of the bereaved husband had not been made interesting by Virgil, and could not be made interesting again by a poet who should realise them by his own power of independent sympathy. The conclusion is an unhappy imitation of an unhappy thought of Dryden's, whose ode ends, as Johnson remarks, with a false antithesis. Dryden balances Timotheus, who metaphorically 'raised a mortal to the skies,' against Cecilia, who, according to the legend, literally 'drew an angel down.' Pope contrasts the power of Orpheus, which literally 'raised a shade from hell,' with that of Cecilia, which metaphorically 'lifts the soul to heaven.' Both are unfortunate, but Pope the more so, as he gives the weaker, the metaphorical attribute, to the power which he is anxious to show to be the stronger. It may be observed, too, that Pope's epigram is more gratuitous than Dryden's, as, while the power of Timotheus is the one subject of 'Alexander's Feast,' Orpheus is the hero of only part of Pope's performance, and so need not have been recalled to the stage at the falling of the curtain. Pope might probably have done better if he had followed Dryden's example more closely, and made his ode turn entirely on the Orphean story, which he might then have related with greater fulness; though his subject would have been less suitable to his purpose than Dryden's, as being calculated to bring out only a single effect of music, its power to soothe and soften, not that universal mastery over the various forms

of human emotion which the tale told by Dryden so gloriously embodies. Of course Pope is not to be compared with any ideal standard, or to be blamed because he could not philosophise on music like Wordsworth in his 'Ode on the Power of Sound,' or make us feel the spell which it lays on a reveller as intuitively as Mr. Tennyson has done in the earlier part of his 'Vision of Sin.' All that could be asked of him was that he should exhibit his own strength; and this he has certainly failed to do. The cause of this inequality is doubtless to be found in his inaptitude for lyric metres. The beaten track of the heroic couplet he knew; but, in attempting the wider and more complex harmonies of the ode, he was venturing on a region which, though visited by many, had been fully explored by none, and from which only one had returned with anything like adequate success.[1] He knew his failure, and never repeated the experiment. I need say nothing of his attempts to imitate the Greek chorus, which Mr. Arnold has lately had occasion to notice. Warburton thinks them 'enough to show his great talents for this species of poetry, and to make us lament he did not prosecute his purpose in executing some plans he had chalked out;' but the reconciliation between the two contending branches of the drama was not to be accomplished by the insertion of choruses about 'Moral truth and mystic song,' 'Guilty joys, distastes, surmises, ...

[1] I see that Dryden uses the same image in speaking of the Pindaric ode in a letter to Dennis (Malone, vol. i. part 2, p. 35):—'I could wish you would cultivate this kind of ode, and reduce it either to the same measures which Pindar used, or give new measures of your own. For, as it is, it looks like a vast tract of land newly discovered: the soil is wonderfully fruitful, but unmanured; overstocked with inhabitants, but almost all savages, without laws, arts, arms, or policy.' Anyone who has glanced at the Pindaric compositions of the seventeenth century will see that Dryden's language is amply merited. Dennis wrote a Pindaric ode to Dryden on his translation of the Third Georgic.

'False tears, deceits, disguises, Dangers, doubts, delays, surprises,' in tragedies altered from Shakspeare by the Duke of Buckingham.

IV. '*Windsor Forest.*

The poems from which Pope is supposed to have drawn hints for 'Windsor Forest' are Denham's 'Cooper's Hill,' Waller's 'Verses on St. James's Park,' and Addison's 'Epistle from Italy.' The two former belong to a different period, and so are to be contrasted rather than compared with Pope's poem, though the first has sense, vigour, and some force of imagination, and the latter fancy and a turn for courtly compliment: but the third affords a better analogy, not only in versification and language, but in the treatment of the subject, where local description is intermixed with reflections on politics. Here, however, as elsewhere, Pope's command of diction and harmony give him an unquestionable pre-eminence. His poem is also distinguished from those of his predecessors by a number of descriptive touches, though it may be doubted whether they are of the kind which is most proper for poetry. We see not only the fisher and his angle, but the different colours of the various fish—not only the sportsman and his gun, but the several parts of the pheasant, discriminated according to the hues of their plumage. The description is sufficiently minute; but little or no imagination seems to have presided over it, and the emotions which it raises are not much more elevated than the childish wonder with which a savage regards a picture simply because it is a picture. Add to this that the poet is led to compensate for the want of imagination in his manner of conceiving the object by a stilted magniloquence which is meant to do duty as the language of

poetry. The barrel of the gun becomes 'the tube,' the report 'a short thunder,' the shot the 'leaden death,' the fishing-rod 'the reed.' It would be a little unfair to parallel the description of the pheasant with that of the phœnix in Whitbread's Rejected Address for the opening of his own theatre, which, according to Sheridan's report, was a regular poulterer's description, beak, feathers, and all; but though the reader's eye may be supposed to rest on the beauty of the plumage as he sees the bird on the ground, it would hardly take in all the various particulars; and there is something ludicrous in supposing them to be severally pleading for the creature's life. Johnson blames Warton for comparing Pope's description of the stag-chase disadvantageously with Somerville's, alleging that they stand on different grounds, the latter being the author's main subject, the former an incidental feature, to be briefly despatched; but if Warton had chosen to amend his plea, and point to the stag-chase in 'Cooper's Hill,' he might, I think, have shown that Denham has given more poetical interest to the object than Pope. Denham does not describe the antlers or quarters of the stag, but he awakens human sympathy for the hunted animal, whose race for life is represented in language which may remind us of the human colouring of the picture of the bull-fight in the Third Georgic, or of the more pronounced pathos of Wordsworth's 'Hart-leap Well.' The passage is too long, not merely for quotation, but for the propriety of the poem; but I extract a few lines:—

> Betrayed in all his strengths, the wood beset,
> All instruments, all arts of ruin met,
> He calls to mind his strength, and then his speed,
> His winged heels, and then his armed head,
> With these to avoid, with that his fate to meet;
> But fear prevails, and bids him trust his feet.

So fast he flies, that his reviewing eye
Has lost the chasers, and his ear the cry;
Exulting, till he finds their nobler sense
Their disproportioned speed does recompense;
Then curses his conspiring feet, whose scent
Betrays that safety which their swiftness lent:
Then tries his friends; among the baser herd,
Where he so lately was obeyed and feared,
His safety seeks; the herd, unkindly wise,
Or chases him from thence, or from him flies.
Like a declining statesman, left forlorn
To his friends' pity and pursuers' scorn,
With shame remembers, while himself was one
Of the same herd, himself the same had done.[1]

Pope's minuteness of description, however, does not extend to the main features of the forest, which, as Warton points out, are mostly described in language that would apply to almost any other place. 'He' (the critic), retorts Johnson, 'must inquire whether Windsor Forest has in reality anything peculiar;'[2] a remark which will appear in its true light when illustrated by another Johnsonian dictum—'Sir, when you have seen one green field, you have seen all green fields: Sir, let us walk down Cheapside.' Mr. Carruthers reminds us that we have another poem in our language which was composed 'under the oak-shades of Windsor Great Park,' Shelley's 'Alastor;' and though it does not profess to represent the spot, its pictures of forest scenery are anything rather than vague or generalised.

'Windsor Forest' contains some happy imitations of passages in the Latin classics, and one so unhappy as almost to extinguish the merit of the rest. In the story

[1] Thomson, in his description of the stag-hunt, may have had his eye on Denham.

[2] Review of Warton's *Essay*.

of Lodona, Pope has shown that he can tread in the steps of Ovid; but it is difficult to estimate the want of poetical feeling which, even to compliment a patron, could so travestie those noble but melancholy lines in which Virgil gives the palm of happiness to an insight into the causes of things, and the next place to rural enjoyments, as to make an award assigning the first prize to a life at Windsor Castle, the second to a life in Windsor Forest.

V. *The 'Rape of the Lock.'*

If we need not spend much time over the 'Rape of the Lock,' it is only because there can be little to say about a poem so exquisite in its peculiar style of art as to make the task of searching for faults almost hopeless, that of commending beauties simply impertinent. Here, indeed, Pope was on his own ground, and his progress from first to last is a continued triumph. His marvellous polish of language and metre, his exuberant liveliness of fancy, his fondness for classical imitations, which are too often only parodies, may occasionally appear unseasonable elsewhere; but here they are thoroughly in place. The air of studied stiffness, which is apt to spoil the effect of his prose compliments to his female correspondents, is carried off and disappears in the atmosphere of a poem the metre and conduct of which proclaim it to be designedly artificial. Where no warmth is expected or desired, we do not feel frigidity; where there is no work for imagination to do, we do not complain that her place should be supplied by fancy. That the machinery is borrowed, Pope himself confesses; but Warton testifies that the debt extends to nothing more than the general idea of the existence of these sylphs and gnomes: and though, to take another instance, all honour is to be given to Dryden for the sub-

lime conception of employing the guardian angels of kingdoms as the supernatural motors of an epic, scarcely less would have been due to Pope had he introduced them, as he hoped to do, in his own projected poem without the sacrifice of dignity or propriety. Many will doubtless agree with Cowper that

> The man that means success should soar above
> A soldier's feather, or a lady's glove;

but while such regrets may affect our estimate of the poet, they are out of place in considering the poem. In an artistic sense, the labour is not misapplied, for it accomplishes its result, and there is no reason to think that the same thing could have been produced at less cost. Pity as it may be that so slender a pillar should have to bear so large a part in sustaining the weight of so great a reputation, no one can say that the consummate art of its workmanship would not render it a conspicuous object in any palace which has ever been reared for the Muses under our own or any other sky.

VI. *The 'Temple of Fame.'*

It is not strange that in an age when translations from the classics seem to have been as popular among the writers and readers of poetry as original compositions, men should have attempted to modernise the earlier authors of their own language. Dryden had published adaptations from Chaucer in his 'Fables,' the work of his old age, which had attained, as it deserved, splendid success; the story of 'Palamon and Arcite,' as rewritten by him, being a sort of specimen of his powers in the minor epic. To modernise Chaucer accordingly was one of the exercises proposed to himself by the youthful Pope.

The 'Temple of Fame,' however, the only one of these displays of talent which need be noticed here, exceeds the ordinary license of a modernised imitation. Chaucer's 'House of Fame' consists of three books; Pope has almost wholly confined his attention to one of them, the last. His omissions are more extensive than his alterations; but in a poem of which every part is characteristic, to omit largely is in effect to alter largely. The change in the versification produces a change in the whole external form of the work. Dryden had substituted his own vigorous heroics for the ruder ten-syllable lines of Chaucer; but the measure was really the same, and the infusion of a little new blood in the shape of one or two more modern or more full-sounding words was frequently all that was wanted to make the old verses such as a later age might read with pleasure. But the seven-syllable or eight-syllable metre of the 'House of Fame,' running on from line to line without balance and without pause, had no parallel in Pope's time to plead for its retention; and the heroic in Pope's hands is much less Chaucer-like than in Dryden's. The step in the one case is from the hexameter of Ennius to that of Lucretius or Catullus; the step in the other is from the Saturnian measure of Naevius to the hexameter of Virgil. The Gothic house is pulled down, and a temple of the Composite order erected on its site. Few things, certainly, can be less like the manner of Pope than Chaucer's opening ejaculation, 'God turne us every dreme to goode!' followed as it is by above sixty lines of disquisition on the material or supernatural character of dreams, by way of introduction to the dream which is the subject of the poem; or than the eagle's somewhat unreasonable attempt to extract a compliment from the poet at the end of the long discourse with which he has enlivened their aerial journey—

Telle me this now faythfully,
Have I not preved thus symply,
Withouten any subtilite
Of speche, or grete prolyxite
Of termes of philosophie,
Of figures of poetrie,
Or coloures of retorike?

Pope preferred, as he tells us himself, to take a hint for his opening from other poems of Chaucer which begin with a description of some season of the year. One of these poems—'The Flower and the Leaf'—is included among Dryden's paraphrases; and Pope's exordium shows that he had his eye on his master. But his language and versification, finished as they are, have not the spring and life of Dryden's; and, after a few lines, he wisely declines the contest with one of the most musical and energetic passages of description which are to be found in that great poet's works. The picture which he raises in the next paragraph seems open to an obvious objection. Standing between earth, seas, and skies, he sees the globe below him hanging self-balanced in air, with its rising mountains, circling oceans, naked rocks, empty wastes, towering cities, green forests, sailing ships, trees, temples, and alternations of sunshine and cloud. A poet's fancy is not to be circumscribed; but we may perhaps question whether Pope had reflected that he is supposing himself to take a very distant and a very close view of the earth at one and the same time. Chaucer's eye rolled in no such fine frenzy. Borne in the talons of his eagle, he rises gradually. On first looking down he sees the various objects which Pope has enumerated, but on a second view these have vanished, and the earth is just recognisable, not as a self-sustained ball, but as something no bigger than a point. In Pope's account of the temple, and throughout the poem, we may

observe an intermixture of the moral with the allegory, which in Chaucer is mere simplicity, but in a more artificial poet is unpoetical and tasteless. Thus, we are told that the ice-palace is impaired alike by storm and sun, *for* fame decays both by envy and by excess of praise—that the wall has the multiplying effect of glass, *for* romantic fame increases all—that crowds of all degrees bend before the goddess, *for* good and bad alike are fond of fame. Nor is there much to commend in the manner in which the heroes and kings are for the most part represented. Some notion is given to us of what they were historically; but we do not see their statues, or, if we do, the marks of likeness are generally commonplace. What conception of sculptured imagery do we gain from being told that Scipio was great in his triumphs and great in retirement, that Aurelius had a well-balanced mind, that Agis was not the last of Spartan names? or from the negative statement that 'Brutus his ill genius meets no more'? In the six primary columns the representation is addressed more directly to the eye, but in general it is poorly imagined, though the language is ornamental and the lines sonorous. The best of the figures is Pindar; the worst, Horace, who is hardly described at all, unless by the epithet 'happy,' and the mention of his lyre, though we see the accessory sculptures round his column, and are told that he imitated Alcæus and Sappho. Chaucer, it is true, is not more graphic; but he apparently means us to think not so much of the bodily similitude of the individual poets as of the office which they perform, each standing on his pillar and supporting the fame of some grand historical event. Nothing need be said of Pope's selection of the six great names of ancient literature, except that it illustrates the range of his own reading and of that of his time, when Plato and the Greek dramatists

were all but unknown to the general student, and the poets had thrown the historians completely into the shade. The conclusion of the poem, which is Pope's own, reminds the reader gracefully enough of the individuality of the author: it is awkwardly placed, however, as the subject has shifted from the temple of Fame to that of Rumour; and, if the criticism is not too microscopic, the last couplet is blemished by a rhyme—*unknown* and *none*—which is either no rhyme at all, or the rhyme of a word rhyming to itself.

VII. *The Elegiac Poems.*

The 'Elegy on the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady' has, I venture to think, been a little over-praised. The prevailing sentiment of the piece is one which calls out but a very qualified sympathy, and the images by which it is advanced approach too nearly to poetical or rhetorical commonplace to excite any warmer feeling than that of admiration for the beauty and ingenuity of their expression. Our sense of the 'striking abruptness' of the opening is materially diminished when we find that both thought and language are taken from the commencement of another elegy on a lady, by Ben Jonson. Nor does it seem possible to abate the censure which the great moralist passes on 'the illaudable singularity of treating suicide with respect.' Pope, who was always more or less of the critic and the reasoner, does not merely commend the lady's death to our feelings, but argues in its praise; and by argument he must accordingly be judged. He pleads for her as a lover, and he pleads for her as a Roman—two characters which might possibly be found capable of reconciliation if we knew the secret of her personal history, but which certainly do not amalgamate readily in our thoughts. A Roman death was frequently

proposed as an object for the enthusiasm of the last century; but there probably was never a period in which fewer Roman spirits walked on the earth; and it would require strong evidence to make us believe that this heroine, as she appears to have been, of an attachment to one who was her superior in rank, was animated by anything like the spirit of the daughter of Cato and wife of Brutus. The very address to the 'Powers' is a piece of unreality in a serious poem; and it is strange recklessness, if not something worse, to talk of heaven as the origin of that ambition which was 'the glorious fault of angels and of gods.' The poet's teaching might have been immoral, yet he might have found his way to our feelings; but what feeling can be touched by a vindication of ambition as having originated with the fallen angels, and having thence passed into the breasts of kings and heroes, who are called 'their images on earth'? The contrasted picture of the meaner souls is striking, but perhaps too satirically ingenious for elegy; the image of the sepulchral lamps is spoiled by the less appropriate one which follows, of the Eastern kings; and a modern reader may be excused for preferring 'the long mechanic pacings to and fro, The set grey life, and apathetic end,' of 'Love and Duty.' The 'ruby lips,' the breast that once warmed the world, and the 'love-darting eyes,' are somewhat commonplace in themselves, and, in the connexion in which they stand, affect the fancy rather than the feelings. A set appeal to them can hardly suggest the thoughts which the poet would have to knock at the heart of the 'false guardian.' The words with which Lear's agonised soul expires, though apparently similar, are really different: in his mind, if in anyone's, the thought of the soul which is gone must have been undistinguishably blended with that of the form which he

clasps in his arms; yet all is contained in a single word —'her lips'—with not even an epithet to indicate the mysterious union of beauty and death. The rest of the paragraph, however, is grand in its way—a denunciation of the terrible revenges of Greek legend in the majestic style of the translation of Homer. In the lines on her funeral, I conceive, with submission, fancy is again predominant over feeling. The first few couplets are admirable; but when he comes to disparage the ceremonial observances of which she has been deprived, he passes into an enumeration which is too much of a *locus classicus* of the funeral honours usual among Englishmen, more judicious, because shorter, than Lucan's catalogue of the rites which were dispensed with at the marriage of Pompey and Cornelia. The remainder of the poem is graceful, and not unaffecting, though the tone seems to vary a little between that of the admirer and that of the lover. There is something ungracious in pointing out what appears to be the defects of a work that has had so many eulogists, but I trust that it may be possible to do so in the present day without becoming obnoxious to the language with which Warburton crushed a similar attempt by Lord Kaimes, and being reminded of the difference between 'the candour of a sensible and reflecting judge,' and 'the malice of every short-sighted and malevolent critic.'

The Ovidian Epistle is one of those artificial kinds of composition which can hardly hope to retain permanent favour. Horace and his imitators might write to their friends in familiar verse, as poets to readers of poetry; but there is something undramatic in representing the letters of lover to lover, even in the heroic age, by the studied elaboration of the modern elegiac couplet. If Pope's Eloisa does not talk in the language of epigram, there is something in her utterances which seems too

stately and rhetorical for the occasion that calls them forth. The fact that we have her letters to refer to, and can see that Pope has followed them more or less closely throughout his poem, only makes us feel the contrast between the more natural and less natural forms of expression more strongly. Every point that is selected has the most made of it: the artist goes to work, and examines the turns which can be given to the thought, the possible felicities of the language, the charms of which the versification is capable; inquiring, not as a great dramatist would inquire of himself, in what manner his heroine would most naturally express her feeling, but how he can express it most finely as a poet. Taken as a poem, it is undeniably marked throughout by great vigour and sweetness: line follows line, each more forcible and musical than the last, till we are lost in wonder at the patient strength of execution that could sustain itself so long. But it would be vain to pretend that every part of the poem is calculated to give the same pleasure. The contrast between the heavenly and the earthly love is meant to be broadly marked, and the distinction is effected by stripping the latter of anything approaching to ethereal purity, and reducing it to merely sensual desire; while even there, as in the 'Elegy,' Pope's argumentative vein breaks out, and immoral doctrines are put forward in a tersely dogmatic form. To say that the coarseness of some of the expressions of passion is rendered from Eloisa's own letters,[1] is only to say that Pope ought never to have chosen the subject, especially as his plan has led him to amplify and embellish every detail, throwing no part of his heroine's feelings into the shade, but exhibit-

[1] Eloisa's letters I only know from the extracts given in Warton's *Essay*; but it appears from an article on Pope in the *Quarterly Review*, vol. xxxii., that Pope has aggravated coarseness into licentiousness.

ing each emotion, whether virtuous or criminal, in all the light that poetical diction and harmony can shed over it. The passages which speak of cloistral solemnities, of the neighbouring scenery and its effect on the mind, and of the details of Catholic worship, are in general eminently beautiful, though the researches of the critics or Pope's own admission have shown that for some of his most striking expressions or lines he has been indebted to predecessors who are now only known to travellers along the byeways of English poetry. The egotism of the conclusion is artfully introduced, and additional interest is lent to it by the mystery that hangs over the attachments which Pope appears to have felt; but with the 'Temple of Fame' and the 'Elegy' fresh in our memory, we rather resent a third attempt to make the feelings with which we lay down a poem rest not on the subject, but on the writer.

VIII. *The Translation of Homer.*

To censure Pope's 'Homer' as un-Homeric has now become a cheap and easy task. It was always known not to be a close rendering of the original; and the difference of centuries between the manner of the pre-historic age of Greek literature and the manner of the English poetry of Queen Anne's reign has at last made itself felt by readers of every sort. Whatever errors there may be in the conceptions of style which prevail in the present day, there can be no doubt that a keen appreciation of the characteristic style of different periods, a perception of the historical analogies of different manners of writing, are more generally diffused now than was the case even thirty years ago. The various translators of Homer, as a general rule, have simply rendered him into the style in which

they were themselves accustomed to write—some with greater, some with less fidelity to the words of the Greek, but none of them paying any special attention to the Homeric manner. Chapman's early-English fortunately happens to coincide to some extent with Homer's early Greek; but though his simplicity strikes us in contrast with the conventional art of a modern poet, he is an Elizabethan writer all over, continually running off into quaint conceits, forced metaphors, and a philosophical jargon, for which it is needless to say that his author affords no warrant. Ogilby and Hobbes simply fashioned 'Homer' into such English as they could command; and if their language is mean and their metre rugged, it is because they had not the genius or the skill to do better. Dryden, indeed, in the preface to his 'Fables,' dwells at some length on the difference between Homer and Virgil, asserting that the former is more congenial to his own temperament, and consequently more pleasant to translate, than the latter; but his general notion is that Homer is more rapid and careless, Virgil more slow and careful; and he shows his sense of the distinction when he passes from one to the other, simply by throwing off restraint, disdaining to correct his language, and taking liberties with versification: he imitates the simplicity of the old Greek garb merely by appearing in public in his own dressing-gown and slippers. Cowper, writing after Pope, had the advantage of knowing what to avoid; but he was misled by a false analogy, and seeing in Milton a great epic poet, austere in his manner and repellent of meretricious ornament, attempted to force on Homer a style which, rightly considered, is almost as artificial as Virgil's, and which, moreover, he was himself unequal to wield. Sotheby is the last whom I need name; and his translation, though welcomed with enthusiastic encomium by Professor Wilson in a series of

brilliant articles, which it is a satisfaction to see reprinted, is really, as Christopher North's friend Tickler observes in another part of the same magazine, only Pope spoilt, closer to Homer in words, and with fewer additions of the translator's own, but in all its essentials as much a poem of 1834 as Pope's is a poem of 1715–1725, with all the difference between them which existed between the two men as poetical artists. Errors of this kind we can now understand, and it is perhaps a wonder that they should not have been understood sooner. In one sense we may very probably be losers by the discovery; in another we shall certainly be gainers. A future Pope is not unlikely to be deterred from attempting Homer at all; but should he make the experiment, he will hardly be satisfied with merely giving a new nib to the pen which executed the boyish version of the 'First Book of Statius his Thebais.'

So much it was necessary to say on the theory of translation; and now we are free to do justice to the extraordinary and unrivalled excellence of the poem, as a product of Pope's peculiar power. Probably no other work of his has had so much influence on the national taste and feeling for poetry. It has been—I hope it is still—the delight of every intelligent schoolboy: they read 'of kings, and heroes, and of mighty deeds,' in language which, in its calm majestic flow, unhasting, unresting, carries them on as irresistibly as Homer's own could do, were they born readers of Greek; and their minds are filled with a conception of the heroic age, not indeed strictly true, but almost as near the truth as that which was entertained by Virgil himself. Their imagination is refined, exalted, satisfied. All the felicities of Pope's higher style are concentrated in this translation. It occupied ten of the best years of his life, and it adequately represents the fruits which powers like his were sure to produce by the mere

force of constant exercise. The peculiarities of his own mind, which sometimes offend us when exhibited on a small scale, do not appear equally unpleasing when we see them more at large. It may be only an arbitrary fancy, but I do not find the modernisation of Homer nearly so frigid as the modernisation of Chaucer. The language which Achilles and Agamemnon are made to talk seems less inappropriate than the words which are put into the mouth of Eloisa. One cause doubtless is, that Pope was compelled to allow himself less latitude and exhibit himself less. His 'Homer,' though a sufficiently free translation, is a translation after all. It was on this limited neutral ground, I incline to think, that his genius as a writer on heroic or ideal subjects was best qualified to expatiate. For such themes it was well that others should find the thoughts, he undertaking to supply the manner, the diction, and the numbers. Marvellous as his 'Pastorals' are, as I have said, as a feat of youthful dexterity, he would probably have done more justice to his own gifts had he merely given a translation of the 'Eclogues.' We should then have had a version which, though inferior to Dryden's in freedom, facility, and dauntless vigour, might, even at that early time of Pope's life, have shown marks of a skill resembling, however faintly, the exquisite delicacy of Virgil's own touch. As it is, we have poems which, while owing nearly all their merit to the passages in which they remind us of Virgil, have not the substance and texture of independent works—Virgil's images and Virgil's thoughts, but not strung together in Virgil's order. From such an attempt his reverence for Dryden, whom even then he doubtless aspired to succeed, would alone have been sufficient to deter him. It was, on the whole, fortunate that the same feeling, aided by the inducements of interest and the solicitations of friends, led him to under-

take the great work which Dryden had hoped to compass, but had left unaccomplished.

But whatever may be thought of the wisdom of his engaging in such a task at a time so critical for his fame, there can be no doubt that the applause with which his contemporaries almost unanimously greeted the appearance of his translation was richly deserved. It was not to be expected that they should weigh Chapman's merits against his in a goldsmith's scales; Chapman must have been already half obsolete, and would naturally appear to them only as one of the representatives of a state of literary barbarism, from which it was their glory to have at last completely emerged. Hobbes' 'unstudied and unpretending language,' which Sir William Molesworth thought might give the reader a better notion of Homer's style than Pope, was estimated by them as what in fact it is, merely a piece of bald writing, which would be poetry if it could; and Ogilby, the favourite of Pope's schoolboy days, and the banker on whom he not unfrequently drew for rhymes while composing his own translation, though a faithful interpreter of the Greek, ranks as an epic poet below Sir Richard Blackmore. Dryden, as was just now observed, from his incredible carelessness and rashness, fails just where he might have been expected to succeed; he sees that factitious dignity is no longer required, and therefore takes out a license to be vulgar; and in the very same volume, where he shows, in his adaptations of Chaucer and Boccacio, how well he could write while on his good behaviour, Jupiter is made to call Juno his 'household curse,' his 'lawful plague,' his 'other squinting eye;' and the gods are sent off to bed 'drunken and drowsy,' even the Thunderer applying 'his swimming head to needful sleep.' Tickell's version of the First Book of

the 'Iliad,' which appeared within a day or two of Pope's,[1] and was the cause of the rupture with Addison, though

[1] It appears from advertisements quoted in Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes* (vol. i. p. 109), that Pope's first volume was due June 6, 1715; Tickell's, June 8. In one passage Pope afterwards condescended to borrow from his rival—that describing the abduction of Briseis by the heralds. Pope's lines at first were—

> She in soft sorrow, and in pensive thought,
> Supported by the chiefs on either hand,
> In silence passed along the winding strand.

For the two latter of these we now have—

> Past silent, as the heralds held her hand,
> And oft looked back, slow moving o'er the strand.

Tickell's lines being—

> Sore sighed she, as the heralds took her hand,
> And oft looked back, slow moving o'er the strand.

It is curious that this circumstance of Briseis's looking back, which is not in Homer, but was apparently first introduced by Dryden, perhaps from the picture of Andromache's departure from Hector in *Iliad* vi., should have become so identified with Homer as to be reproduced not only by Sotheby, who is in general faithful enough, but by Cowper, who, contrasting his treatment of the original with Pope's, says, 'I have omitted nothing; I have invented nothing.' Other coincidences between Pope and Tickell seem to be merely fortuitous; as when Pope (in the first, as well as in subsequent editions) renders

ἔλκετο δ' ἐκ κολεοῖο μέγα ξίφος,

> While half unsheathed appeared the glittering blade,

Tickell—

> And half unsheathed he held the glittering blade;

the picture, though not the words, having been doubtless taken from Dryden's

> Half shone his falchion, and half sheathed it stood,

as that may have been from Ogilby's

> His sword half out.

I had hoped to have been able to present those who may be curious, as I am myself, about this passage in literary history, with a specimen, if not an entire transcript, of the MS. remarks which Pope at one time (see Johnson's *Lives*, Cunningham's edition, vol. iii. pp. 43, 44) thought of publishing on Tickell's version. It appears from Nichols's *Anecdotes* (vol. v. p. 640) that this volume (a copy of Tickell with remarks in Pope's handwriting), having been accidentally separated from Pope's other books, fell into the hands of Isaac Reed; and that Hurd, to whom Warburton had given the rest of

hailed by the Whig coterie as 'the best that ever was made,' is really a performance of no remarkable merit; a respectable production of the Addisonian school, with far less vigour than Dryden's, and far less splendour than Pope's; and the passages in which, as his friend Young told him, he was allowed even by partial judges to have outdone his rival, can only be called inferior, though meritorious, specimens of the heroic style of which that rival proved himself so great a master. There is another translation of the greater part of the First Book, by Maynwaring, now so completely forgotten, that probably scarcely a single reader of Johnson's 'Life of Pope,' where it is casually mentioned, knows where it is to be found, as it was published anonymously in the fifth volume of Tonson's 'Miscellany,' and is not included in the author's 'Remains'—a level, matter-of-fact, business-like composition, never rising into high poetry, and sometimes sinking into low prose.[1] Pope, while smarting under the non-recog-

Pope's library for the collection belonging to the see of Worcester, wished to purchase it, when Reed generously presented it to the collection, observing that such treasures should not be made a matter of bargain and sale. I accordingly applied to the Bishop of Worcester, who kindly threw open to me the library at Hartlebury; but I found that the volume was missing, its existence being vouched for by a catalogue dated May 28, 1808, as the fact of its absence is recorded in pencil on the margin of the same catalogue by some later hand, probably within the last few years. Nichols, however, says that Reed, before sending the book to Hurd, caused a transcript to be made, and that this transcript was afterwards in the possession of Alexander Chalmers; so that it is possible that some one may be able to point out the copy, even if the original should prove to have been irrecoverably lost. Since the above was written, my attention has been called to the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1836, p. 349, where the author of an article on Pope speaks of a copy of Tickell containing Pope's MS. remarks as in his own possession.

[1] Pope, and, I think, Tickell are under some slight obligations to Maynwaring, as all three of them doubtless are to Dryden. Compare the following:—

> Thou glorious light! whom Tenedos obeys.—*Maynwaring.*
> Thou source of light; whom Tenedos adores.—*Pope.*

nition of his own superiority, had thoughts of republishing this version, together with Dryden's and Tickell's, side by side with his own, that the public might judge more readily of their respective merits. Let us do him some portion of that justice which booksellers' difficulties prevented him from doing to himself, by setting down in juxtaposition a short passage from each of the four translations. The specimens I have selected are, so far as I can judge, adequate representatives of the average quality of each; though Dryden in particular, along with some worse passages, contains some better. Those who care to compare them with the Greek, which is not my present object, may turn to 'Iliad,' i. vv. 233—247.

DRYDEN.

But by this sceptre solemnly I swear
(Which never more green leaf or growing branch shall bear,
Torn from the tree, and given by Jove to those
Who laws dispense and mighty wrongs oppose),
That when the Grecians want my wonted aid,
No gift shall bribe it, and no prayer persuade.
When Hector comes, the homicide, to wield
His conquering arms, with corps to strew the field,
Then shalt thou mourn thy pride, and late confess
Thy wrong repented, when 'tis past redress.
He said, and with disdain, in open view,
Against the ground his golden sceptre threw;

Encouraged thus, the blameless prophet spoke.—*Maynwaring.*
Encouraged thus, the blameless man replies.—*Pope.*

Till prosperous gales, no bribe or ransom paid,
To longing Chryses bear the black-eyed maid.—*Maynwaring.*
Till the great king, without a ransom paid,
To her own Chrysa send the black-eyed maid.—*Pope.*

Black choler boiling in his manly breast.—*Maynwaring.*
Black choler filled his breast that boiled with ire.—*Pope.*

Maynwaring intervened between Dryden and Pope and Tickell, the date of the fifth volume of the *Miscellany* being 1704.

Then sate: with boiling rage Atrides burned,
And foam betwixt his gnashing grinders churned.

MAYNWARING.

But by this awful sceptre now I swear
(Which ne'er again will happy branches bear,
Nor native bark, nor growing leaves will shoot,
But left on distant hills the kindly root,
And now with Grecian judges must remain,
Who right dispense, and sacred laws maintain),
Hear what I swear: whene'er the Greeks shall want
My needful aid, destruction to prevent,
And with regret their lost Achilles mourn,
No prayers nor gifts shall bribe me to return:
Hector shall strew with slaughtered foes the field,
And no relief thy impotence shall yield;
But, torn with deep remorse, thy heart shall break
For wronging thus in arms the bravest Greek.
The speech concluded, in disdain he tossed
His sceptre down, with golden studs embossed:
Atrides also stormed.

TICKELL.

But thou my fixed, my final purpose hear:
By this dread sceptre solemnly I swear,
By this (which, once from out the forest torn,
Nor leaf nor shade shall ever more adorn,
Which never more its verdure must renew,[1]
Lopped from the vital stem whence first it grew,
But given by Jove the sons of men to awe,
Now sways the nations and confirms the law),

[1] Tickell seems in this couplet to have been indebted to the *Rape of the Lock*, Canto iv. vv. 135, 6:—

Which never more its honours shall renew,
Clipped from the lovely head where late it grew.

Such an appropriation would hardly have been made by one who translated Homer with the express object of injuring Pope by his rivalry. Pitt has borrowed from one or other of the couplets in his version of the sceptre-passage in the Twelfth Æneid.

A day shall come when for this hour's disdain
The Greeks shall wish for me, and wish in vain;
Nor thou, though grieved, the wanted aid afford,
When heaps on heaps shall fall by Hector's sword:
Too late with anguish shall thy heart be torn
That the first Greek was made the public scorn.
He said, and mounting with a furious bound,
He dashed his studded sceptre on the ground;
Then sat: Atrides, eager to reply,
On the fierce champion glanced a vengeful eye.

POPE.

Now by this sacred sceptre hear me swear,
Which never more shall leaves or blossoms bear,
Which, severed from the trunk (as I from thee),
On the bare mountains left its parent tree;
This sceptre, formed by tempered steel to prove
An ensign of the delegates of Jove,
From whom the power of laws and justice springs
(Tremendous oath! inviolate to kings):
By this I swear, when bleeding Greece again
Shall call Achilles, she shall call in vain.
When, flushed with slaughter, Hector comes to spread
The purpled shore with mountains of the dead,
Then shalt thou mourn the affront thy madness gave,
Forced to deplore, when impotent to save:
Then rage in bitterness of soul, to know
This act has made the bravest Greek thy foe.
He spoke, and furious hurled against the ground
His sceptre, starred with golden studs around:
Then sternly silent sat. With like disdain
The raging king returned his frowns again.

This will enable us to measure Pope's superiority to his predecessors. What they did with more or less success, he did excellently. Dryden was the only one of them that could have stood the competition with him; and Dryden was exposed to defeat by his own disdainful

security. Pope's lines are, indeed, a memorable comment on what was urged in the early part of this essay about the exactingness of his self-criticism. We feel that the passage could not have been written at once—that his first thoughts must have more nearly resembled those of his competitors, and that it can have been only after many reconsiderations that they assumed their present form. I do not know what evidence would be furnished by the famous MS. of Pope's 'Iliad' in the British Museum, which I have never had the opportunity of consulting; but the specimens of other passages quoted by Johnson and by Disraeli the elder are enough to show what it probably would be; and we must not forget that there are such things as mental erasures, effacing first draughts, which have never been written down.[1]

Perhaps there will be no more convenient place than the present for speaking of the epic poem, which was the project of Pope's latest years. He told Spence[2] that he should certainly have written an epic poem if he had not engaged in the translation of Homer, so that it is perhaps to that cause that we owe the non-fulfilment of a dream which actually took substance in his early boyhood, and towards the end of his life was regarded as a thing half accomplished already.[3] Yet, though it is no wonder that he should have entertained a thought which had filled Dryden's mind, it seems not unlikely that distrust of his own genius might have prevented him, even in his hot

[1] 'One must tune each line over in one's head, to try whether they go right or not.'—Pope, speaking of pastoral versification (Malone's *Spence*, p. 72).

[2] Malone's *Spence*, pp. 34, 54.

[3] '"Though there is none of it writ as yet, what I look upon as more than half the work is already done, for it is all exactly planned." . . . "It would take up ten years?" "Oh, much less, I should think, as the matter is already quite digested and prepared."'—Malone's *Spence*, p. 56.

youth, from executing a work for which English poetry supplied no model within the reach of his imitation; while we can scarcely doubt that his reading, multifarious, but not profound, would not have stood in the place of invention, and supplied him with the substance without which an undertaking of that compass would have been sure to collapse. Nor were the changes which took place in his taste and feelings, as he receded from youth, such as were likely to be favourable to epic inspiration. His early aptitude for criticism and argumentative writing had developed into an inclination for philosophical study and didactic exposition.

'The idea that I have for an epic poem of late,' were his words to Spence, 'turns wholly on civil and ecclesiastical government. The hero is a prince, who establishes an empire; that prince is our Brutus from Troy, and the scene of the establishment, England. . . . . What was first designed for an epistle on Education, as part of my essay-scheme, is now inserted in my fourth "Dunciad;" as the subject for two other epistles there (those on civil and ecclesiastical government) will be treated more at large in my "Brutus."'

Possibly another poet, of profounder philosophic insight and stronger imagination, might have accomplished the task, even under this view of it, without investing the heroic ideal with unseasonable modern associations; but Pope was not likely to do so. The government introduced by Brutus was to have been the early English constitution; the religion, that Deism which Pope seems to have embraced in his heart—as the real truth which underlay his hereditary Catholicism. 'Brutus is supposed to have travelled into Egypt, and there to have learnt the Unity of the Deity and the other purer doctrines afterwards kept up in the Mysteries.' The prose draught itself of the plan of 'Brutus,' which is given in

Ruffhead's 'Life,' and reprinted in Mr. Dyce's Memoir prefixed to the Aldine edition, as it ought to be in all biographies of the poet, is not very promising. Brutus is a philanthropist, who thinks not merely of settling the countrymen he has ransomed from slavery in an appropriate spot, but of planting pure manners in a virgin soil; he argues against the avarice and effeminacy of his less enlightened followers, who wish to settle in rich and fertile districts, 'as incompatible' (I quote Ruffhead's words) 'with his generous plan of extending benevolence, by instructing and polishing uncultivated minds.' His followers are alarmed by an Aurora borealis; he admits that he is as ignorant of it as they, but calms their terrors by the general reflection that Heaven never works miracles but for the good; and accordingly, when they are attacked by barbarians the same night, the light proves serviceable for their defence. He lands in Britain, partly for the purpose of confounding the credulity which represented our island as inhabited by demons. He encounters giants who symbolise superstition, anarchy, and tyranny, and priests and magicians, whose supposed supernatural powers resolve themselves into the possession of natural secrets, such as the use of gunpowder. Then there were the guardian angels of kingdoms; and what proof had Pope shown of his capability, as Dryden expresses it, of managing anything so ponderous? Nor were these somewhat naked conceptions to have been clothed in the dress which mantles so proudly round the 'Homer,' and fits so gracefully to the 'Essay on Man.' He had adopted blank verse, as Johnson says, 'with great imprudence, and I think without due consideration of the nature of our language'—of that part of our language, at least, which was understood and wielded by himself and his great

critic. Some lines with which he appears to have enriched the description of 'the lovely young Lavinia' in Thomson's 'Seasons' are graceful enough; but they afford no proof that he had the real command of a measure which he appears never to have practised, and which appears in the eighteenth century to have been all but a lost art. On every account there seems reason to rejoice that Pope's epic never came to the birth. What Lord Macaulay is in prose, that Pope was in poetry. Each affords an exemplification of the truth of an acute remark made by the former,[1] that 'the world generally gives its admiration, not to the man who does what nobody else even attempts to do, but to the man who does best what multitudes do well.' Each has won, and justly won, almost unbounded applause by a number of comparatively short pieces, where any defect in the matter is neutralised by the transcendent skill of the manner. Each has been led, and fortunately led, to concentrate the full force of his genius in setting forth and adorning a story which, though doubtless standing in need of appreciation, repels the aid of invention. Had Lord Macaulay's judgment been less sound, he might have possibly been induced to expend the prodigal wealth of his historical knowledge, his extraordinary narrative skill, and the exuberance of his power of vivid illustration, on an attempt to rival the creations of Sir Walter Scott. It was Pope's happiness, when still meditating epic song, to find himself condemned 'ten years to comment and translate.' Dr. Henry, in his commentary on Virgil,[2] aptly remarks on 'the resemblance between these professedly original poems, but really semi-translations of the "Æneis"' (such as Ronsard's 'Franciade,' of which he happens to be speaking), 'and our modern professed

[1] *Essay on Addison.* [2] *Classical Museum*, vol. vi. p. 39.

translations, but really semi-original poems.' Pope was, in fact, realising his own dream without knowing it, in a better way than if he had worked on his own plan. His greater epics are the English 'Iliad' and 'Odyssey,' as his lesser are the 'Rape of the Lock' and the 'Dunciad.'

IX. *The 'Dunciad.'*

The 'Dunciad' is unquestionably a very great satire. As in so many of Pope's works, the conception may be found elsewhere, but the execution is pre-eminently his own. The empire of Dulness had been described by Dryden in 'Mac-Flecknoe,' but 'Mac-Flecknoe' is to the 'Dunciad' what a masterly sketch is to a finished painting. Satire had been conducted in heroic pomp through six cantos, by Garth, in his 'Dispensary;' but though there are good poetry and good sarcasm in the 'Dispensary,' they are not the poetry and the sarcasm of Pope. The same power which in the 'Rape of the Lock' was employed to give pleasure, is employed in the 'Dunciad' to give pain. It is precisely because, as I have said, he was qualified to succeed in the heroic vein, not as an original inventor, but as a translator or close imitator, that he succeeds so admirably in the mock-heroic. His sympathy with epic grandeur is the sympathy of art, not of kindred inspiration; he can catch the tone of the grand style, but he is never so identified with its spirit as to be unable to contemplate it *ab extra*; he can see how it may be employed to burlesque the mean as well as to extol the lofty, nor is he in any danger of forgetting that the more than royal honours which he pays to his hero are paid only as a refinement of insult. There is a felicitous appropriateness, too, in the scope of his satire, at least as originally conceived. It is an involuntary

comment on one of Aristotle's definitions, which perhaps has never received so strong a light from the best intentions of any commentator—that in which he erects the absence of art into a kind of positive quality, and calls it intellectual creation under the guidance of false reasoning. Just as Pope's own art was a power of which he was able, in whole or in part, to explain the mystery, admitting the public into the workshop, and displaying the secrets of the machinery, so the blundering which he chose to satirise was not simply capricious or inscrutably abstruse, but had intelligible laws of its own—it was, in fact, if we may so paraphrase Aristotle's word ἀτεχνία, an art of no art. The treatise on the Bathos had unfolded this method of going wrong in burlesque prose; the 'Dunciad' was to exemplify it in burlesque verse. The lines on false description, near the opening of the First Book, are an admirable specimen of Pope's power of illustrating absurdities, and show, moreover, how much his hand had gained in strength and delicacy since the 'Essay on Criticism':—

> Here gay Description Egypt glads with showers,
> Or gives to Zembla fruits, to Barca flowers;
> Glittering with ice, here hoary hills are seen,
> There, painted valleys of eternal green;
> In cold December fragrant chaplets blow,
> And heavy harvests nod beneath the snow.

Yet we may be struck here with the same thing which I noticed in speaking of 'Windsor Forest'—a tendency to dwell on the mere obvious externals of description. He takes no note of deeper offences against the truth of nature, as he had shown no deep sense of that truth in his own practice. Glittering hills and green valleys in their right places are what he praises; glittering hills

and green valleys in their wrong places are what he blames.

But, however strong the admiration with which we may regard the 'Dunciad,' heavy deductions remain to be made. Pope himself spoiled it, by the confession of all, when, to gratify the pitiful spleen of his latest years, he changed the hero from a dull plodding scribbler to a lively caterer for the popular taste; retaining, nevertheless, as he could hardly avoid retaining, most of the accessories of the original poem. Individual passages are made more brilliant—indeed, how could a fresh touch from Pope fail to communicate fresh brilliancy?—but the intellectual consistency of the poem, so far as it depends on its central figure, is gone. Nor was the previous addition of a Fourth Book—the 'New Dunciad,' as it was at first called—a happy thought. The arrow was aimed too high, and so, though, like that of Acestes in Virgil, it displayed the art of the veteran and his sounding bow, it struck no mark. The splendid passage which once contained its anticipation, and now forms its conclusion —that passage which Pope himself could not repeat without a faltering in the voice, which Johnson recited with a kindred emotion, and which, in Mr. Thackeray's judgment, shows the author to be the equal of all poets of all times—is, I venture to think, incommensurate with its subject. An artist may describe the corruption of art: to speak adequately of the great twilight of the gods, when truth and wisdom shall be vanquished by falsehood and ignorance, requires an understanding that can comprehend, an imagination that can grasp, the several branches of knowledge. The general part of the description is, perhaps, worthy of the theme. The mythological image of Medēa blighting the stars is grand; the sacred image of Chaos uncreating the universe is

sublime. But the extinction of the individual luminaries is not pursued with uniform success. Physic, Metaphysic, and Mathematics perish as they might be expected to perish; but the lines in which Faith and Philosophy decay are inadequate; those in which Religion and Morality expire, almost trivial. Great as were Pope's peculiar powers, it was not for him to make his intellect the standard of measurement for the generation in which he lived. He had read widely, but to erect himself into an arbiter of learning, and affect to discriminate true knowledge from false, was the mere insanity of presumption, as one memorable instance shows. Bentley had wielded his Thor's hammer against an army of puny assailants; Pope hailed the defeated pigmies as his brethren, and placed the conquering giant among the dunces. Even in those cases where the poet was intellectually competent to award praise or censure, his private enmities often made him grossly unjust. Several of those who are held up to scorn as miserable poetasters, seem in reality to have been humbler fellow-labourers with himself in the work of giving strength and sweetness to English versification. Take, for instance, some of the lines which he has quoted in the preface to the poem as tributes to his merit extorted from his opponents. Lastly, where the intellectual demerits of the persons attacked appear to have been real, it is but very seldom that our moral feelings can go along with the inflictor of the chastisement. 'Its victims,' to borrow the words of Sir William Hamilton on another occasion, 'are treated like vermin; they are hunted without law, and exterminated without mercy.' They are lashed for their vices by one who, for his love of filthy and revolting images, as shown in this very poem, might well be called upon to strip his own back.

The Roman satirist could speak feelingly of the poverty of his literary brethren, and lament the cruel ridicule which attended it; the English humourist gibbets it as a crime. Such inhuman, unpitying animosity cannot be justified, even on the plea of retaliation; and the plea of retaliation, though elaborately urged, seems not to have been always true. *This* is not 'heroic courage speaking, a splendid declaration of righteous wrath and war.'[1] It is rather an unblessed contest, undertaken in the spirit of Persian tyranny against those who would not propitiate the arrogance of one man, and waged partly with weapons of the keenest edge and finest temper, but partly also with noisome implements of offence, and inventions of gratuitous barbarity.

X. *The Moral Epistles and 'Essay on Man.'*

The ambition of being a philosopher was a feeling not unknown to the poets of Augustan Rome. It would be too much to say, with the 'learned and every way excellent' person who gave Dryden a life of Virgil, that the subject of his biography wrote poetry to get a fortune on which to live as a philosophical student; but many passages in Virgil's poems prove that he dabbled in physical speculations, and lead us to receive with attention, if not with implicit credence, the story that, after finally polishing his 'Æneid,' he meant to devote the rest of his life to science. Propertius expressly holds out to himself the prospect of retiring after a youth of pleasure into an old age of study, to be passed in inquiring into the changes of the moon, the origin of wind and rain, the reason why the four seasons are no more than four, the

[1] I quote Mr. Thackeray, who seems, however, to be speaking only of the conclusion of the poem.

probability of a final dissolution of the universe, and the truth of the legends about Tartarus. It is not probable that Pope thought of either of these parallels; but in his case, as in theirs, the same causes seem to have produced the same effects. Further prosecution of knowledge had led to a sharper division of the several sciences from each other, so that Pope's speculative interests are not as wide in their range as those of Propertius; they appear, however, to have included ethics, political philosophy, natural theology, and an inquiry into the limits of the human intellect. His 'Brutus,' as we have seen, was to have been philosophical; his 'Essay on Man,' like the 'Excursion,' was but part of a cathedral that was never completed. It would have been better if he had taken pattern by the Augustan poet whom he knew best and imitated most successfully, confining his philosophy to practical observations on the conduct of life, and leaving more recondite inquiries without a sigh to any noble or reverend Iccius whom he might number among his friends. That he should have occupied his mind with such thoughts at times is not unnatural, and, in fact, highly commendable; that he should have digested them into verse is, on the whole, to be regretted. The former half of the first and most ambitious of the 'Moral Essays' consists of remarks of no great depth, expressed in couplets such as those which form the staple of the 'Essay on Criticism,' neatly rather than felicitously worded. The worldly observer, who despises book-philosophy, is told that his tendency may be pushed to an extreme, and apparently blamed as if he were apt to overlook the fact that men not only differ from each other, but are inconsistent with themselves—certainly not the error into which a sage of this class might be expected to fall. We are then instructed that actions are no sure test of character, that the observer's

prejudices often vitiate his judgment, that passion often overpowers reason, and so action is determined by chance; that some men are uniformly intelligible, others uniformly inscrutable, but that most completely baffle observation by their inconsistency, right actions sometimes arising from wrong feelings, and character being generally determined by education. The sum of all is, that there is nothing in which a man cannot change:—

> Manners with fortunes, humours turn with climes,
> Tenets with books, and principles with times.

But there is a way to educe Cosmos from this Chaos, and that is by finding out the ruling passion. This doctrine announced, Pope leaves an element for which he is not fitted, and passes into one which is all his own. He forgets his philosophy, does not prove his great principle, but takes it for granted, and proceeds to illustrate it with a series of brilliant and spirited sketches, known doubtless to every reader of poetry. As we see Dryden's 'Zimri' revived in the elaborate portrait of Wharton, and smile and wonder at the skill which tells so well, though so briefly, the anecdotes of Helluo, Narcissa, the courtier, and Euclio, we are willing to forget that the epistle consists of anything else but such triumphs of dexterity as these. The remaining three essays are, happily, not constructed on so philosophical a basis. Pope's opinion of women must have been contemptuous indeed, if he thought he had given a really exhaustive analysis of the female character in the 'Epistle to Martha Blount;' but, taken as a jest, his theory may pass, and its lightness is redeemed by the heavier metal of the lines on Atossa, and the four or five concluding paragraphs, some of the most delicate, wise, and feeling verses that Pope ever wrote, where he specially addresses the lady of his love. It is

the same with the third epistle, on the 'Use of Riches,' which Pope told Spence he had laboured as much as any of his works. To dilate on the extremes of avarice and prodigality requires a rhetorician rather than a philosopher; to exhibit them in the concrete is work for a humourist rather than for a dramatist. The humour of conceiving bribery to be carried on without a circulating medium perhaps wears out when protracted through seven illustrations; nor is there much to console or edify in the thought that hoarding and squandering are as much parts of the general balance of the universe as drought and rain, or the ebb and flow of the sea. But though the truths which the pictures embody are not of the profoundest, the pictures themselves will not be willingly let die while the language lives—the Villiers, the Cutler, the Sir Balaam, and even the less delicate and more obvious delineation of the Man of Ross. Taste is a subject more congenial to an artist than the doctrines of morality, and accordingly, if there is not more to admire in the fourth epistle than in the rest, there is less to question. If it is a subject that has its limits, it must be owned that within those limits justice has been done to it. Whether Timon's mansion was intended for Canons, is a question unhappily of serious significance to the author's character; but it does not affect our sense of the variety, vividness, and energy of his poetry.

If we must trust a letter from Bolingbroke to Swift, the task of writing the 'Essay on Man' was not only not sought spontaneously by Pope, but, when urged upon him, accepted with considerable reluctance. The applause with which the poem was received may have led him to think that his genius had been more truly estimated by his friend than by himself, and to entertain those further projects for the union of philosophy with poetry at which I

have already glanced; but his natural instinct seems to have told him that he was unqualified for the undertaking. Brilliant in many respects as the result of the experiment has been, I cannot but think that his hesitation was right, and his compliance ill-judged. Bolingbroke was of opinion that the subject was one on which he and Pope might advantageously labour side by side, pursuing the same end by different means. 'The business of the philosopher,' he writes, 'is to dilate, if I may borrow this word from Tully, to press, to prove, to convince; and that of the poet to hint, to touch his subject with short and spirited strokes, to warm the affections, and to speak to the heart.' These words, though apparently just, are somewhat vague; but we may, I presume, interpret them in the light of the approbation which he gave to Pope's poem when written. Can it be said, however, that the 'Essay on Man' is really what Bolingbroke seems to have wished it to be?—that it brings out the poetical or imaginative aspect of the subject, and discards the philosophical or argumentative? The work is cast into a form nearly resembling that of a prose treatise of the more rhetorical sort; appeals to the imagination and the feelings are introduced not sparingly; but the staple of the poem is argument, or what is intended to be such. Not far from the beginning we meet these lines:—

> Of systems possible, if 'tis confessed
> That wisdom infinite must form the best,
> Where all must full, or not coherent be,
> And all that rises, rise in due degree;
> Then in the scale of reasoning life, 'tis plain,
> There must be, somewhere, such a rank as man;
> And all the question (wrangle e'er so long)
> Is only this—if God has placed him wrong?

Johnson has shown that this passage is not good philoso-

phy; it remains to ask, Is it good poetry? What is there in the language or the thought which gains from the metrical form into which they are thrown? The lines are somewhat bald, and the expression is far from clear. Pope did not generally condescend to the artificial inversion which places the adjective after the substantive. Here, in a passage where simplicity was an object, we have 'systems possible' followed by 'wisdom infinite'—combinations, too, which have the effect of producing a disagreeable monotony, occurring in the same part of the lines to which they respectively belong. Nor is it easy to collect from the mere words of the third line that Pope meant, as Warburton expresses it in his prose, 'that the best system cannot but be such a one as hath no inconnected void, such a one in which there is a perfect coherence and gradual subordination in the parts.' It would not be difficult to point out other passages which are not poetry, but simply argument in metre. Pope says himself, in the 'Design' prefixed to the poem:—

> I chose verse, and even rhyme, for two reasons. The one will appear obvious—that principles, maxims, or precepts so written both strike the reader more strongly at first, and are more easily retained by him afterwards; the other may seem odd, but it is true. I found I could express them more shortly this way than in prose itself; and nothing is more certain than that much of the force as well as grace of arguments or instructions depends on their conciseness.

In other words, he chose metre, not from any consideration of the fitness of the subject for poetry, but partly for his reader's convenience, partly for his own: he knew how much he could pack into a single line or couplet, and he knew that verse is useful as a *memoria technica*. And yet, with all this, he has not produced, I do not say a philosophical, but a strictly argumentative work. We are

not carried on regularly from stage to stage of the discussion as we should be carried on by any prose treatise of merit, or as we are carried on by the powerful flow of versified reasoning, the combined logic and rhetoric of the 'Religio Laici.' We stop to admire the neatness and terseness of particular lines, the vivid and harmonious language of particular paragraphs; but we do not at once see the connexion of thought, though we are every now and then reminded that we have been making progress, and are expected to admit some new point on the strength of what has gone before. In fact, the sentences which I quoted just now from Pope's preface contain an involuntary confession. He busies himself chiefly with 'principles, precepts, or maxims,' not with consecutive reasoning. The effect on the reader is what might be anticipated. A multitude of isolated lines have imprinted themselves on the public memory, and form part of the public stock of quotation. But it may be doubted whether, of the thousands that have read the poem, there is one who could sit down without consulting it afresh, and give anything like a connected sketch of the argument.

It is a great mistake to imagine that thoughts which can be expressed with force and beauty in prose can be expressed with greater force and greater beauty in verse. On the contrary, it will often happen that a very perceptible loss is occasioned by the transference. Something will probably be omitted, either from the mechanical difficulty of bringing it into metrical shape, or from deference to the dignity of poetry, and thus there will be a loss of perspicuity. Even where a conception has been safely transferred, it is likely to have sustained a further loss—a loss of propriety. The dignity of poetry may have been consulted, even to the sacrifice of clearness of expression, but it will probably not have been wholly propitiated.

The conception, as it would be naturally worked out in prose, will doubtless present various features, some of a more, others of a less elevated character. The former may perhaps be improved by the embellishment of verse; the latter will certainly be injured. Prose is, in fact, the more plastic material of the two—capable of being better accommodated to the various gradations of thought and feeling. As an instance of what I mean, I will take leave to transcribe a fine passage from Shaftesbury, quoted in one of Warton's notes on the 'Essay on Man':—

> Imagine only some person entirely a stranger to navigation, and ignorant of the nature of the sea or waters, how great his astonishment would be when, finding himself on board some vessel anchoring at sea, remote from all land prospect, whilst it was yet a calm, he viewed the ponderous machine firm and motionless in the midst of the smooth ocean, and considered its foundations beneath, together with its cordage, mast, and sails above! How easily would he see the whole one regular structure, all things depending on one another, the uses of the rooms below, the lodgments, and the conveniences of men and stores! But being ignorant of the intent, or of all above, would he pronounce the masts and cordage to be useless and cumbersome, and for this reason condemn the frame and despise the architect? O my friend! let us not thus betray our ignorance, but consider where we are, and in what universe. Think of the many parts of the vast machine, in which we have so little insight, and of which it is impossible we should know the ends and uses, when, instead of seeing to the highest pendant, we see only some lower deck, and are in this dark case of flesh confined even to the hold and meanest station of the vessel.

Warton justly remarks that this is a noble and poetical illustration of many passages in Pope's essay. It seems to me that it is nobler and more poetical in its present form than it would be if turned, even as Pope would have turned it, into verse. The description contained in the first sentence would not have really gained much from

being associated with a more measured cadence, a more regular recurrence of sounds. It would then have provoked comparison with other passages more truly imaginative; as it is, we have the feeling of poetry without the pretension. The second sentence would certainly have suffered. We might have retained the cordage, mast, and sails: we should inevitably have had to part with the uses of the rooms below, the lodgments, and the conveniences of men and stores, which would either have been slurred over in some general expression or exaggerated into something unseasonably picturesque. So on through the rest of the passage: in return for a slight increase of beauty in one or two of the parts, we should have sacrificed the propriety of the whole. Even if the thoughts and language were preserved nearly intact, the uniform elevation of the metre would be a misfortune. It would be raising the lower parts on stilts, in order to bring them to a level with the higher. Yet this imaginary case is precisely what we see realised in the 'Essay on Man,' with all the adroit cleverness of its ordinary manner, all the sonorous grandeur of its occasional bursts of eloquence. Johnson says of the blank-verse poem of one of the subjects of his biographies, that he wishes it well enough to wish it were in rhyme. A well-wisher to Pope's essay would, I think, wish it were in prose. Perhaps one who has felt the power of Plato, and read the 'Essay on Epitaphs,' might be tempted to wish the same for the 'Excursion.'

XI. *The Imitations of Horace, &c.*

Pope's predilection for ethical poetry grew on him, as I have said, in his later life. In his last illness he compared himself to Socrates, dispensing his morality among his friends just as he was dying. His last compositions,

however, were rather satiric than strictly ethical. But satire and ethics had come to be associated in his mind as two aspects of the same thing. Even the ferocity of the 'Dunciad' he wished to be regarded as virtuous indignation, the natural feeling of one whose life was a 'more endearing song' than his poetry, against scribblers, who had not only wounded his taste by their dulness and his just self-love by their unprovoked libels, but outraged his moral sense by the scandalousness of their lives. On the other hand, the exordium of the 'Essay on Man,' with its sporting metaphors of 'shooting folly as it flies,' and 'catching the manners living as they rise,' and its proposal 'to laugh where we must,' and 'be candid where we can,' promises us satire as well as ethics. Again, in the 'New Dunciad,' the last substantive work which he seems to have written, he uses up materials which had been intended to appear in a new series of 'Moral Epistles.' His 'Imitations of Horace,' of which it now remains to speak, extend over several years, a period partially coinciding with that during which the works mentioned in the preceding section were composed or published. Like the 'Essay on Man,' they were suggested to him by Bolingbroke, and the suggestion was this time an eminently fortunate one. The thought of pointing an ancient satire with modern applications had occurred to others. Rochester had made Dryden the hero of an experiment of this sort; Dryden, while stigmatizing[1] those who, as he says, persecute Horace 'by their ignorant and vile imitations of him, by making an unjust use of his authority and turning his artillery against his friends,' himself went a step further, introducing his enemy Shadwell into what professed to be a translation of 'Juvenal;' and his own name, along with that of Roscommon, takes the

[1] Preface to *All for Love*.

place of Orpheus in a version of the Eighth Eclogue by his ally Dr. Chetwood.[1] But Pope's imitations, it is needless to say, are so excellent of their kind as to obscure all previous attempts, and constitute, as it were, a class by themselves. As in the translation of Homer, he has the advantage of being able to superadd his own terseness and brilliancy to Horace's sense, while he can afford to allow himself more freedom, and keep with safety at a greater distance from an original whose genius and literary position were in many respects nearly akin to his own. Johnson, perhaps, thinking of his own 'Juvenal,' and writing in one of those gloomy fits of self-depreciation of which we have a specimen in the opening of the celebrated preface to the 'English Dictionary,' observes that 'such imitations' as Pope's 'cannot give pleasure to common readers: the man of learning may be sometimes surprised and delighted by an unexpected parallel; but the comparison requires knowledge of the original, which will likewise often detect strained applications.' Yet I am mistaken if a common reader may not enjoy these imitations nearly as much as any of Pope's more original satires—if they have not, in fact, yielded nearly as large a percentage of familiar quotations; while those who read Horace certainly have the additional pleasure of seeing how dexterously the English poet pursues the track of the Latin, now striking out a happy translation, now an unexpected analogy, sometimes deviating from the way, but never losing it. We have none of those elaborate characters in the delineation of which Pope shone so much; but there is the same power of touching contemporary events gracefully, the same nod of easy recognition for a passing friend, the same transient flush as an opponent crosses his path, while the texture of the whole poem is generally stronger than what Pope

[1] Published in vol. i. of the *Miscellany*.

cares to employ in his own occasional pieces. They are like a felicitous quotation, which is often worth more than an independent *bon mot*, having all its own wit and wisdom, and all the associations of the original passage besides. The one point in which Pope differs most markedly from Horace is his versification. It has been said[1] that the Roman poet wilfully untuned his harp when he commenced satirist; Pope, without attempting to import into satire the sonorous cadence of the epic, polishes and points the lines which are to reproduce Horace as scrupulously as those which are to render Homer. It is what Roman satire would have been had it accepted the regulating mechanism of the elegiac couplet—an epigram, as one of the writers in the Greek anthology expresses it, prolonged into a rhapsody. Each form has its advantage for what is, in fact, an embodiment of sparkling social talk, witty and wise—the loose fireside robe as well as the trim evening dress—and we need not adjust their claims to preference.

The 'Epistle to Arbuthnot,' which comes under notice here from having been finally made the Prologue of the 'Satires,' is justly characterised by Johnson as 'a performance consisting of many fragments wrought into one design, which, by this union of scattered beauties, contains more striking paragraphs than could probably have been brought together into an occasional work.' This plan of utilizing pieces formerly written was a favourite one with Pope, and throws some light on his theory of composition, accounting for the want of connexion which I have noticed in the 'Essay on Man,' and for what, I think, may be observed in some of his other poems, the superiority of parts to the whole. Thus in the Prologue there are plain

[1] The expression is quoted by Scott—*Life of Dryden*, p. 239 (ed. 1834)—but I do not know where it is to be met with.

marks of joining—signs that the poem was written up to some of the fine passages which form its glory. It would read, for instance, equally well as a whole if the unrivalled character of Atticus were omitted. We can see indeed that the name of Addison in the previous line was intended to prepare us for it; still, it breaks in some measure the continuity of the satire, which had been treating of scribblers before, and (not very consistently with the emphatic 'Peace to all such!') goes on to treat of them afterwards. It is easy to see, too, that though the mention of the supposed injury done by Addison to Pope naturally forms a part of this apologetic autobiography, it would have been differently and more clearly indicated if Pope had not had the portrait already finished and lying by him, and had not felt, justly enough, that such brilliant and vigorous drawing might be spoilt by any touch which could be regarded as an alteration. The picture of Bufo has every appearance of being a separate sketch of the same kind. It has no real relation to the context, as Pope does not speak of himself as aggrieved by Bufo, but only affects to contrast him with himself; while the fact that Pope had some kind of grudge against Halifax only makes it less likely that the grudge should not have been hinted at if these lines had been actually written for the occasion. I may add, too, that this view of their insertion will meet the objections to identifying Bufo with Halifax which have been found in the fact that Halifax had been dead nineteen years when the satire was published, and in the honourable mention which Halifax receives in the Epilogue to the 'Satires' four years later. The lines on Bufo, like the lines on Atticus, were doubtless in the poet's desk; the feeling which prompted the one, like that which prompted the other, had doubtless cooled to a great extent, but the lines themselves were not to be lost;

while after their publication the satirist was at liberty to say a good word for Halifax, as he has said a good word for Addison. But whatever skill has been shown in the framing or hanging of the pictures, this Prologue or Epistle must be always regarded as a splendid gallery; though we may question whether the likenesses are not idealised throughout, by self-flattery where he talks of his own life, as by animosity where his subject is Atticus, Bufo, or Sporus. The Epilogue is not equal to the Prologue. The satire is transient, not concentrated; and the grand passage about the triumph of Vice—'perhaps the noblest,' according to Warton, 'in all his works, without any exception whatever'—is, I think, one of those where Pope does not rise to the full height of his subject. An allegorical picture might doubtless be founded on the hints there given; but the attitude of most of the figures, and the expression of their features, would have to be the painter's own; and the conception which is most carefully elaborated, that of England's genius dragged at the chariot-wheels of the victorious power of evil, would be but too susceptible of a commonplace rendering.

But it is time to conclude a task which it is perhaps presumptuous to have undertaken. I should be glad to think that what has been here attempted insufficiently would be adequately performed by some other writer. Pope's poetry has hardly received yet the careful critical examination which it deserves. The last century, indeed, can boast of Johnson's masterly critique, and the more elaborate, though less penetrating, survey by Warton. But I am not aware of anything in our own day which meets the requirements of the subject. At one time it was made a battle-field for rival poets—Bowles, Campbell, and Byron—to fight out their contending theories; but no poet has done for Pope what Scott has done for

Dryden, producing a biography which is a real contribution to the history of English poetry. Parts of his works have been examined effectively by Professor Wilson and Mr. de Quincey; but there is no single judgment of his various writings worthy of being named with those articles on Dryden with which the 'Edinburgh Review' has been successively enriched by two of its most distinguished contributors.[1] But the union of great knowledge of literary history with great power of poetical criticism is rare; where those qualities exist together there are other fields to invite them; and it is possible that we may have to wait some time before our literature receives the desired accession.

[1] Vols. xiii. and xlvii. There are some valuable remarks in a third article on Dryden in the volume for 1855. The article on Pope, in vol. xxxii. of the *Quarterly Review*, contains some just criticism.

LECTURE ON 'KING LEAR.'[1]

In proposing to speak of one of the greatest works of England's greatest poet, I have chosen a subject which cannot have much recommendation on the ground of novelty. Where, however, there is so much power and beauty, there is sure to be novelty enough. We can never be certain that we apprehend that power and beauty fully —rather, we may be certain that we never can fully apprehend them; and so, regarding our wealth as inexhaustible, we may well expect that each successive visit to the treasure-house will only enable us to carry away more.

Most of us know the story of King Lear too well to need being reminded of it at any great length. We know how the king, feeling old age increase upon him, resolves to disburden himself of his royalty, and share his kingdom among his three daughters—how the two elder, in return for their large professions of love, receive their portions, while the third, not caring to vie with them in lip-service, is excluded from her inheritance—how the king finds his elder daughters grudge him the entertainment they had promised him at their courts—how he expostulates till impatience turns to madness, and he breaks away, a houseless wanderer, seeking refuge, as it were, in the storm without from the storm within—how his discarded daughter levies an army to reinstate her father in his kingdom—how she is vanquished and put to death in spite of those who

[1] This Lecture was delivered at the Boston Athenæum, the Oxford Working Men's Association, and the Woodstock Night Schools in 1857 and 1858. In printing this and the following Lecture the Editor has made but few verbal alterations.

would have saved her—and how the worn-out thread of his life is snapped by the shock, and he dies upon her body. We are acquainted, too, with the by-plot, if such a name can properly be given to what is really an integral part of that grand complex unity—the second story of filial ingratitude and filial love, of the base-born son who supplants his brother and his father, and the lawful son who, himself an outcast, attends on the father who had wronged him, as he wanders helpless and blind. After this preliminary recapitulation we may proceed to the play itself, which I shall attempt to recall to recollection by the quotation of the more striking passages.

In the opening of the play we have a conversation between two noblemen, the Earl of Kent and the Earl of Gloster, on the partition of the kingdom, which has been already announced, though not formally carried into effect. So far the dialogue would seem to be merely a simple and natural introduction to the play, in which no more is meant than meets the eye. But this is not all. Gloster has with him his base-born son, Edmund, and the conversation happens to turn on him, when it is conducted, on the part of the father at least, in a vein of levity which passes into grossness. Readers of Shakspeare will be apt to conclude that this is no more than the ordinary manner of speaking, such as is unhappily only too common in the works of the poet and his contemporaries. But I believe that in this case at least Shakspeare meant much more. Gloster has a terrible future in store for him, and that future is to be brought about through the instrumentality of that very son of whose birth he now speaks so lightly. When we see him the sufferer in a scene which for its combination of physical and moral horror is probably unmatched in any of Shakspeare's undisputed works, the victim of a fate which, however softened and alleviated, renders life henceforth a blank and a desola-

tion, we feel indeed the deepest pity; but we cannot help recurring in thought to the original fault which in the order of Providence has been destined so to avenge itself. This is no mere imaginary connection of sin and suffering: it is what Shakspeare himself intended us to observe. When Edmund is dying, in the Fifth Act, Edgar speaks to him of their father:—

> The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
> Make instruments to plague us.
> The dark and vicious place where thee he got
> Cost him his eyes.

With this connection before us, we cannot doubt that there is a real significance in the lightness with which Gloster in this first scene is made to speak of the sin of his youth. It shows us that he has yet to be taught by suffering; it projects, as it were, the dark shadow of the event. Further, it affords a glimpse of the kind of influences that have been allowed to work on Edmund's own mind. He is the child of a shame which he knows is thought no shame; and so it is scarcely more than natural that he should plot against a brother to whom he deems himself unjustly postponed, and even against a father who, though he ought to have inspired love, can hardly have established a claim to respect. Thus in the compass of a short and seemingly slight dialogue, we are already made acquainted with one of the chief agencies which is to bring about the catastrophe.

The force of the scene of the giving away of the kingdom is patent to everybody. In saying that Lear resigns his power to those who love him not, and excludes her who alone truly loves him, we have in effect said all. The error and injustice have been committed once for all, and the object of the rest of the play is simply to bring their

punishment. I will only touch on one or two things which seem to call for notice. How is it that the king, having arranged, as we know from the previous dialogue, not only the partition itself, but its actual details, now makes it conditional on the warmth of his daughters' professions of love? The answer is to be found, as a great modern critic has seen, in that complexity of character which makes the Lear of Shakspeare what he is to us. He has already taken the resolution on more ordinary grounds, considerations of state policy and regard to his own infirmities; but he has a nature of feminine susceptibility, craving for sympathy and affection, and apt to estimate their reality by their signs, and so in performing an act which is recommended by other reasons, he will indemnify himself for any sacrifice that it may cost him by anticipating the love and gratitude of those who are to profit by it. Probably there is no way in which this complication of motives could have been better expressed than by making this trial of his daughters' affections a kind of afterthought—his 'darker purpose,' as he himself seems to call it—a species of ulterior kingcraft, in his estimation, though in reality it is only the exacting fondness of the father interfering in the king's province. A second point to observe upon is the conduct of Cordelia, which may perhaps appear to some here, as I confess it has at times appeared to myself, to carry sincerity to the very border of perverseness. Why should not she have given her feeling its full and true expression, instead of extenuating it and making it appear to her father's distorted apprehension the very opposite of what she knew it to be? Possibly, if she could have had a knowledge of the future, of her father's misery, her ineffectual attempt to reinstate him, and her own death, dragging his along with it, it might have been her duty to use more conciliatory

language; but it would be hard to say that she ought to have been influenced by the mere prospect of his immediate displeasure falling on herself. She felt his test to be an utterly bad one; the answers which it drew forth from her sisters showed it to be so; and it must have seemed incumbent on her to repudiate it as firmly, though as modestly, as she could. Their large assurances compelled her, as it were, to bring down her own language to the lowest point consistent with truth. Regan had expressly adopted and endorsed Goneril's professions, with the addition of a fresh hyperbole; it remained for Cordelia to separate herself as far as possible from both. She knew that she should be misunderstood for the moment; but she trusted that, in her own words, 'time would unfold what plighted cunning hides.'

And now the award is over: Kent is banished, Lear and his train have withdrawn, and Cordelia has taken leave of her sisters and followed her royal consort. Goneril and Regan remain, to say a few words to each other on what has passed. It is worth while attending to what they say. There is no exultation in their own good fortune, no triumphing in their sister's disgrace, though from their answer to her farewell, it is clear that they have no sympathy with her. All their feeling is concentrated in a care for self-preservation. They have been greatly struck with this new instance of their father's uncertainty of temper, and their sole thought is that if they do not take measures in time, and act in concert with each other, they may themselves be the next to suffer from it. It is evident that the fear they express is really felt by them, not only from the tenor of their language here, but from other parts of the play. Goneril towards the end of the Act expresses her apprehension that the size of her father's train will enable him to hold her life and her husband's at

the mercy of a momentary caprice. In the next Act, when he has flung himself out of Gloster's castle, Regan is anxious that the gates should be shut upon him, for fear of any desperate attempt which his followers may make in his behalf. We may notice, too, that their language has a show of justice; in fact, it is the natural language for them to hold, from their point of view. They simply drop out of sight all consideration of love for their father, and think merely of the annoyance and danger which his infirmities may cause. The fruits of this temper are indeed monstrous; but the temper itself is easily conceivable, perhaps not unusual. It is only selfish coldness, reasoning accurately from its premises—the inexorable logic of a heart without love.

The next scene shows us Edmund's successful attempt to abuse his father's ear and supplant his lawful brother. I have already spoken of the feelings with which he views his own illegitimacy; so I need merely point out the art with which his plot is framed. Gloster has come from Lear's trial of his daughters astonished at the king's weakness in surrendering his power so easily; Edmund takes advantage of the jealousy thus aroused, and makes him fancy that his own rights as a father are threatened similarly, not by his own credulity, but by treachery from without:—'I have heard him oft maintain it to be fit that, sons at perfect age, and fathers declined, the father should be as ward to the son, and the son manage his revenue.' And so the old man at once swallows the bait and puts the two things together:—'This villain of mine comes under the prediction: there's son against father; the king falls from bias of nature; there's father against child.' He has had eyes to see Lear's infatuation, and for that very reason he is blinded to his own.

The remaining scenes of this Act, in which the king

finally breaks with Goneril, may be taken together. Here, again, there is doubtless reason in her complaints: the enormity is that she should not have that natural affection which would cast all such reasons out of sight:—

> By day and night he wrongs me: every hour
> He flashes into one gross crime or other
> That sets us all at odds: I'll not endure it:
> His knights grow riotous, and himself upbraids us
> On every trifle.

And so she resolves that this shall go on no longer, and orders her servants to be disrespectful to him, that matters may come to a crisis—an intelligible course enough, if she owed him no duty, or if a child's forbearance, carried beyond a certain point, passed into weak subserviency. The crisis is brought about by the arrival of Kent, who has disguised himself in order that he may enter his old master's service, and at once resents the insolence of Goneril's menials. And now comes the explosion. Goneril enters, high in anger, and takes her father to task about the misconduct of his followers, in stately, measured language—intimating, moreover, that he connives at the evil, and that he must expect to be made responsible for it. Lear is so astounded at this reversal, as he considers it, of their mutual relations that he can scarcely bring his senses to credit it:—'Are you our daughter? . . Does any here know me? This is not Lear: Does Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are his eyes? Either his notion weakens, his discernings are lethargied. Ha! waking? 'tis not so. Who is it that can tell me who I am? . . Your name, fair gentlewoman?' This, she tells him, is merely of a piece with the rest of his strange conduct; he had better be advised 'by her that else will take the thing she begs,' and reduce his retinue. Stung to madness, he calls his attendants,

and gives instant orders for their journey; he will not remain in her court a moment longer. Albany enters; Lear turns on him, but will not hear or give an explanation: tossed on the waves of his own passion, he vindicates the honour of his followers, parallels Goneril's ingratitude with Cordelia's, and at last bursts out into that terrific prayer, which, though it is doubtless known to many of you, I must quote nevertheless:—

> Hear, nature, hear! dear goddess, hear!
> Suspend thy purpose, if thou did'st intend
> To make this creature fruitful!
> Into her womb convey sterility!
> Dry up in her the organs of increase;
> And from her derogate body never spring
> A babe to honour her! If she must teem,
> Create her child of spleen; that it may live,
> And be a thwart disnatur'd torment to her!
> Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth;
> With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks;
> Turn all her mother's pains and benefits
> To laughter and contempt; that she may feel
> How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
> To have a thankless child!—Away, away!

And so he sweeps away; half maddened by this new wrong, but clinging to the assurance that he will find in Regan's love a compensation for what he has suffered from his other two daughters. Goneril remains with her husband, who questions her part in the breach, but is for the time induced to acquiesce.

One word I must say about the fool, who is introduced in these scenes for the first time. There can be no doubt that he is a specimen, though somewhat idealised, of those strange compounds of lightheadedness and shrewdness whom it was the fancy of the great men of Shakspeare's time to encourage and cultivate. But he is not brought

into the play merely as a comic element, a concession to those of the audience who might not have a relish for deep tragedy. He does, indeed, in some way relieve the feeling which the tragedy excites; but he also deepens it. Our sympathies cling round Lear: we cannot separate ourselves from him; yet we know him to be the victim of a miserable delusion. But there is one person from whom he can bear to hear the truth; and it is in keeping with the utter derangement of men and things about him that that one person should be the fool. Since Cordelia went to France the fool has much pined away, and Lear has noted it well. The spectator or reader feels that the fool is the interpreter of his own thoughts—all the truer, perhaps, because the mode of interpretation is so fantastic.

The Second Act destroys Lear's last remaining hope, the affection of Regan. She and her husband, Cornwall, have left their palace and come to Gloster's castle—partly, perhaps, to avoid a visit from the king; partly, it would seem, to confer with Gloster on business of various kinds. This precipitates Edmund's intention, and he proceeds at once to accomplish his treacherous purpose against his brother, who is made to fly, while the old earl, their father, causes a price to be set on his head. Lear and Goneril have both sent messengers to Regan; his being Kent, hers the very servant whose insolence Kent had resented: and on their arrival at the same time at Gloster's castle, Kent immediately renews the quarrel. The appearance of the duke and his party does not pacify him, and at last he provokes them to order him to be set in the stocks, Regan especially showing her anger, and accepting his conduct as a confirmation of her sister's version of the breach with their father. At this juncture Lear arrives, and his indignation at finding his servant maltreated

swells into a tempest when he hears that Cornwall and Regan refuse to see him. Cornwall and Regan appear, and the old man's rage melts into tenderness as he sees her who is now, in his eyes, the only one that loves him as a daughter. Whether Regan was originally dearer to him than Goneril, we cannot tell; at any rate, we find that while he never attempts to conciliate the elder, to the younger he is at first all fondness and forbearance. Perhaps we may say that though Goneril's demeanour has rendered the breach irreparable, he feels that he may have been too hasty, and is resolved not to err a second time in that extreme. Kent's disgrace he passes by: his one thought is to tell Regan of his wrongs, to crave her sympathy, and to assure himself of her affection. Fortified against all appeals to tenderness, she answers coldly, vindicating her sister, and, like her, reminding him of his infirmities; but though he cannot follow her counsel, he receives it with gentleness, and will not be convinced that she really means to be so cruel. The entrance of Goneril revives in him the passionate sense of wrong; but though he will hold no terms with her, he still remonstrates and reasons temperately with Regan, till at last the long-suppressed emotion forces its way to the surface, and all self-control is at an end:—

> O, reason not the need; our basest beggars
> Are in the poorest thing superfluous:
> Allow not nature more than nature needs;
> Man's life is cheap as beast's: thou art a lady;
> If only to go warm were gorgeous,
> Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,
> Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But, for true need—
> You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need!
> You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
> As full of grief as age; wretched in both!
> If it be you that stir these daughters' hearts

Against their father, fool me not so much
To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger,
And let not women's weapons, water-drops,
Stain my man's cheeks! No, you unnatural hags,
I will have such revenges on you both,
That all the world shall—I will do such things—
What they are, yet I know not; but they shall be
The terrors of the earth. You think I'll weep;
No, I'll not weep:
I have full cause of weeping; but this heart
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws
Before I'll weep.—Oh, fool, I shall go mad!

After he is gone, we have a few words from Regan, Goneril, and Cornwall, the last of whom, unlike Albany, agrees with the course which his wife has thought proper to adopt. Without formally justifying themselves, they show us that they feel no compunction. They have made the old man a reasonable offer: he has refused it, and must take the consequences which the storm, already heard at a distance, threatens to travellers journeying on such a night without shelter.

Everyone who knows even the name of Lear knows him as he is seen at the opening of the Third Act, contending bare-headed with that fearful storm. We are prepared for his appearance by a conversation held by a gentleman of his retinue with Kent, which also serves the purpose of advancing our knowledge of the plot, telling us, what in part we knew already, that Kent has communications with Cordelia, that she is informed of her father's wrongs, and that an army is expected from France to avenge and restore him. And then the scene changes to another part of the heath, and, as the stage direction informs us, the storm continues. Then it is that we see how weak is the most powerful narration of an action as compared with the action itself—that action which is

indeed the very essence, as it is involved in the very name, of the drama. The speech of the gentleman to which I have just adverted would rank as one of the finer speeches in the play; yet how inadequate is the notion that it gives us of the tremendous depth and intensity of the scene which succeeds it! We learn, indeed, that the king is 'contending with the fretful elements,' 'bidding the wind blow the earth into the sea,' 'tearing his white hair,' and 'striving in his little world of man to outscorn the to-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain.' But what is this to the marvellous reality—to the surging tumult of Lear's emotions, as he braves, invokes, or pleads with the storm—now half exulting in the elemental war, as if it were a second deluge sent down to avenge the sin of human ingratitude, and offering his own white head to the stroke which he trusts is to annihilate the whole race of mankind—now exclaiming against the elements as accomplices in his misery, less criminal than his human tormentors, and yet guilty in that they have lent themselves to aid in the work of cruelty—and now, again, passing from the thought of indiscriminate vengeance to that of discriminating justice, and bidding the sinners of the earth tremble at the expectation of the impending doom, which he can contemplate calmly, as being a man more sinned against than sinning? I feel that I am myself weakening the effect of the scene sadly: it is indeed one which had better be read than criticised or characterised; but it would be too long to quote, and no quotation would be complete which did not include the wild accompaniment of the fool, with its bursts of grotesque pathos, and its snatches of stinging satire. It is one of the most touching circumstances in Lear's extremity that he is not so wholly absorbed in the maddening thought of his own wrongs, nor so completely

carried away by his half-savage sympathy with the storm as a judgment on collective humanity, but that he can feel for the sufferings of others in that dreadful night—for the fool, his one inseparable companion—for the unknown and nameless poor, once his subjects, the thought of whom reminds him of his past shortcomings as a king, and for the mad beggar who has taken possession of the hovel in which he is himself obliged to seek shelter. Thus, when Kent first mentions the hovel to him, he turns to the fool:—

> Come on, my boy. How dost, my boy? art cold?
> I am cold myself. Where is this straw, my fellow?
> The art of our necessities is strange,
> And can make vile things precious. Come, your hovel.
> Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
> That's sorry yet for thee.

And again, in a subsequent scene, when they come to the door of the hovel:—

> Prithee, go in thyself; seek thine own ease:
> This tempest will not give me leave to ponder
> On things would hurt me more. But I'll go in:
> In, boy: go first. You houseless poverty—
> Nay, get thee in. I'll pray, and then I'll sleep.
> Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
> That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm;
> How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides;
> Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
> From seasons such as these? Oh, I have ta'en
> Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;
> Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
> That thou may'st shake the superflux to them,
> And show the heavens more just.

In the same spirit, even after his brain has begun to turn, he interests himself to know what has brought the mad beggar, as he thinks him, to his present plight—at first, in the intensity of his self-concentration, assuming that it

must be a case like his own, and that the same suffering can have been produced only by the same maddening injury; but afterwards apparently pitying him for his own sake, enquiring into his past history, and finally concluding, in what perhaps may be called the last words of sanity, 'Thou wert better in a grave, than to answer with thy uncovered body this extremity of the skies.'

Of Lear's madness I cannot trust myself to say anything. When I read the scene, I feel that I can in some measure appreciate its marvellous power; but no one can speak of it profitably who has not some knowledge of the actual phenomena of insanity. It has been pronounced by Coleridge to be the one successful attempt at representing madness throughout the whole range of the drama: all others produce the effect, not of madness, but of mere lightheadedness. The same high authority calls attention to Edgar's assumed madness as serving the great purpose of taking off part of the shock which would otherwise be caused by the true madness of Lear, and further, as displaying the profound gulf which separates the one from the other. In Edgar's ravings, he says, Shakspeare all the while lets you see a fixed purpose, a practical end in view: in Lear's there is only the brooding of the one anguish, an eddy without progression.

The interest of this tremendous Act, the central and culminating point of the tragedy, now shifts from Lear to Gloster. Gloster has expostulated with his guests, Cornwall and Regan, on their treatment of the king, without any result but that of provoking them to threaten him with their displeasure; he now resolves to do what he can himself to alleviate the sufferings of his old master, having first taken counsel with Edmund, whom he further informs of a communication he has received relating to the movement about to be made on behalf of Lear by the

army of France and their English adherents. Edmund has now got the opportunity he looked for: he has supplanted his brother in his father's affections, and he can now supplant his father and obtain, not the prospect of an inheritance merely, but the actual possession. Accordingly he goes to Cornwall, while Gloster seeks out the king, takes him and his companions from the hovel on the heath, and lodges them in an outhouse adjoining his castle. Gloster is himself, as he tells Kent, half mad with misery:—

> Thou say'st the king grows mad: I'll tell thee, friend,
> I'm almost mad myself. I had a son,
> Now outlaw'd from my blood; he sought my life,
> But lately, very late: I loved him, friend—
> No father his son dearer: true to tell thee,
> The grief hath crazed my wits.

Except that he is not houseless, his sufferings appear to be as great as Lear's; yet how much has he still to undergo, and how far is his cup from being full! He returns to his castle, not as yet to find out what has been resolved against himself, but to learn that a plot has been laid against the life of the king. How it is that Regan and her husband and sister, whom we left at the end of the Second Act destitute, indeed, of any sentiment of tenderness towards their father, but apparently not indisposed to render him the offices of hospitality if he would submit to their terms, should have risen so soon to the monstrous wickedness of compassing his death, is a question which we can only answer inferentially. Shakspeare may have meant merely to show how easily a callous nature can be brought to hate intensely where it has injured deeply; but, though such a cause might of itself be adequate to effect the change, we can hardly do wrong in supposing their minds to have been worked on further by jealousy of

Gloster's interference, which would make them feel their own criminality, and produce, moreover, a sense of insecurity, and also by the actual dread of the French invasion, which they would learn from Edmund's disclosure. Gloster is just able to save the king, who is sent off under an escort of his knights to Dover, there to join his adherents; but he has himself to feel the vengeance of the fiery Cornwall. The scene that follows is, as I have already intimated, probably the most horrible in Shakspeare's undisputed works; and yet I hardly know how the poet could have spared us a particle of the horror, though it undoubtedly overpasses the bounds which dramatic writers have generally, and wisely, imposed upon themselves. The mere announcement of an action, as I said just now, affects us infinitely less than the action itself as performed in our presence. It was necessary, in order to fill to the full our conception of Lear's sufferings, that we should know of what fiendish cruelty his enemies are capable; and this is impressed on us far less vividly when we simply hear that they have laid a plot against his life, than when we actually see a venerable nobleman, who has rescued him from them, bound in his chair in his own castle, and having his eyes torn out by the duke's hand. Thus we may feel that Shakspeare has really exercised forbearance, and consulted how to spare the sensibilities of the spectator or the reader: he has not shown us the father actually exposed to the white heat of his children's hatred, but has left us to estimate its intensity for ourselves from the manner in which they deal with his preserver. But the scene itself is one at which we can only hold our breath, and hope that it may pass as speedily as possible. Meantime, it is a consolation to feel that what we witness is not the pure and absolute triumph of wickedness. Cornwall is struck down in the middle of his barbarity,

though he has still time to consummate it; and the sorrow that we feel for the servant, who so generously throws aways his life, is swallowed up in our satisfaction at the thought that the tide of iniquity has at last been in some measure stayed. 'This shows you are above,' is Albany's exclamation when he hears what has happened:—

> This shows you are above,
> You justicers, that these our nether crimes
> So speedily can venge!

Hitherto the course of the play has been such as to make us almost doubt the reality of retribution; now, for the first time, we are reassured.

In the Fourth Act the painful strain which had been put upon our sympathies is gradually relaxed. The shock of horror is over, and it is succeeded by a calm, which, while it gives us leisure to realise the sufferings of Lear and Gloster, yet, from the mere absence of harrowing excitement, can hardly have other than a soothing effect. It is only a consequence of the frightful cruelty which we have just seen perpetrated on Gloster that our thoughts should turn, in the first instance, to him, rather than to the king his master, who would otherwise, of course, be the principal object of our interest; accordingly, it is of Gloster that we first hear. Edgar, whom we see alone for a few moments communing with himself in his own proper character, makes no reference to Lear, from whom he had recently parted; he merely moralises on his own condition, as one who is now at the worst, and can fall no further. The next moment shows him the rashness of his conclusion. He sees his father approach, under an escort provided for him by the servants of the castle, who pity their blind master, and have thought of

the mad beggar as a person who might be induced to act as his guide. 'O Gods,' he exclaims:—

> Who is't can say, I am at the worst?
> I am worse than e'er I was—
> And worse I may be yet: the worst is not
> So long as we can say, This is the worst.

The father blinded—the son proscribed, and compelled to adopt the condition of a mad beggar—both victims of the same conspiracy, and now suddenly thrown together, such is the spectacle that now meets us. Yet, though for the moment we feel with Edgar, and think only of the depth to which both are fallen, we are soon made sensible that there is compensation for both in the mere fact of their meeting. Gloster sees in it only the times' plague, when madmen lead the blind; we know that the heart of the father has been turned again to the child, and that the child, so disguised, will be able to protect the father. Why Edgar, who is no stranger to his father's change of feeling, does not throw off his disguise and make himself known, is one of several questions connected with the economy of the play which I do not feel myself able to answer with confidence. From a passage in the Fifth Act, where Edgar tells his brother and Albany of his attendance on his father, it would seem that he himself, at least, in the freshness of his grief for the old man's death, regards the concealment as a fault; but this is clearly no explanation of Shakspeare's motive. Nor is it sufficient to say that if Edgar had been made to reveal himself, we should have lost the well-known scene that follows later in the Act, where Gloster is deluded into thinking that he is standing on the verge of Dover cliff, and afterwards that he has actually thrown himself down. Great as is the power of that scene for mingled terror and pathos, it would be an

insult to Shakspeare to imagine that he would have purchased its achievement at the price of what he knew to be an error in the conduct of the play; or that if he had chosen to make Edgar adopt a different course, the exhaustless wealth of his creative energy would not have enabled him to produce another scene, worthy in all respects to stand by the side of that which we now admire so justly. The question, I repeat, is one which I do not presume to settle; but it seems possible that Shakspeare may have felt that the old man could at no time have survived the effect of a disclosure which, when it takes place at last, makes, as we are told—

> His flawed heart,
> Alack! too weak the conflict to support
> 'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,
> Burst smilingly.

Or, perhaps we may say, with more probability, that the complete preservation of Edgar's disguise would be likely to make him of more use to his father, whose interest in him might otherwise have broken out in the presence of any of their common enemies. This last consideration Edgar himself would naturally feel at the time with more or less definiteness, while he would no less naturally lose sight of it afterwards, while speaking of his father's death, and blame himself for not having made the acknowledgment earlier, when the old man, as it might appear, had yet sufficient energy to sustain the shock of joy.

For Lear also we feel that the day of consolation has dawned. The same Act that brings Gloster into companionship with his discarded son reunites Lear to his discarded daughter. Cordelia, though cast off, has not been exposed to want or privation; on the contrary, she has been advanced to a condition which now gives her the

means of succouring her father; and her only suffering has been in the thought of the contumely and hardship which he has had to endure. Accordingly, when we read of her grief, we are not pained, but rather soothed and softened. It is a picture of grief, not in its wild intensity, but in its tender beauty:—

> Now and then an ample tear trill'd down
> Her delicate cheek: it seem'd she was a queen
> Over her passion, who, most rebel-like,
> Sought to be king o'er her.
>
> O, then it moved her.
>
> Not to a rage: patience and sorrow strove
> Which should express her goodliest. You have seen
> Sunshine and rain at once: her smiles and tears
> Were like a better day. Those happy smilets,
> That play'd on her ripe lip, seem'd not to know
> What guests were in her eyes; which parted thence
> As pearls from diamonds dropp'd.

For the moment she is separated from him. He is in Dover; but, in his intervals of reason, the thought of his past unkindness to her overpowers him with shame, and he will not see her. At other times he wanders about—

> As mad as the vex'd sea, singing aloud;
> Crown'd with rank fumiter and furrow weeds,
> With harlocks, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo flowers,
> Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow
> In our sustaining corn.

It is in this plight that he falls in with Gloster, is recognised by him, and half recognises him in turn, when a party of Cordelia's followers appear, and he is carried off by gentle violence. So, as the Act closes, we leave him in the French camp, just recovering from the heavy sleep into which exhausted nature has thrown him, and exhi-

biting the proofs of returning reason in the consciousness of past derangement:—

> Where have I been? Where am I? fair daylight?
> I am mightily abus'd. I should e'en die with pity
> To see another thus. I know not what to say.
> I will not swear these are my hands—let's see:
> I feel this pin prick. Would I were assur'd
> Of my condition!

And again:—

> Pray, do not mock me:
> I am a very foolish, fond old man,
> Fourscore and upward; not an hour more nor less;
> And, to deal plainly,
> I fear I am not in my perfect mind.
> Methinks I should know you, and know this man;
> Yet I am doubtful, for I am mainly ignorant
> What place this is; and all the skill I have
> Remembers not these garments; nor I know not
> Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me;
> For, as I am a man, I think this lady
> To be my child Cordelia.

Meanwhile, at intervals during this Fourth Act, we hear of the preparations that are being made by the two English courts to oppose the invaders. Edmund had left Gloster's castle with Goneril, just before the close of the Third Act, as it was not thought decent that he should witness the execution of the cruelty to which his perfidy had consigned his father, and they arrive in company at Albany's palace. From his conversation with the lady, we find that she has conceived a passion for her companion, while she regards her husband with coldness and contempt, as possessed of no true manliness, and altogether unworthy of a mate like her. But Albany's own feelings have also undergone a change. The mistrust with which he has long viewed his wife's conduct to her father is no

longer put aside as easily as in the First Act. He has heard of the effect of her cruelty: he taxes her with it in a tone that will not be gainsaid, and as she meets his reproofs with scorn, he bursts into a strain of execration and menace, which at any rate gives the lie to her assertion that he bears 'a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs.' No doubt Shakspeare intended us to notice the sluggishness of his nature, which does not take fire till after long exasperation and repeated outrages to his sense of right. The same hesitation shows itself in the next Act, where he appears, an undecided general, at the head of his army; so that we conclude that the success of the battle is owing rather to Edmund than to him. On the whole, however, his is a character which must command a considerable portion of our respect. 'Where I could not be honest, I never yet was valiant,' is what he says of himself, and there seems much justice in the self-description. In the first instance he feels himself bound to his wife; she dwells, apparently with sincerity, on the fears she entertains from the king's uncertainty of temper, and he is willing to think that all that is needed is to caution her against the extreme of 'fearing too far.' And now, though his eyes are opened to the 'proper deformity' of her real character, it does not follow that he is to give way to or make terms with the invaders: in his wife's right, he is sovereign of one half of England; and in spite of the provocation which she and Regan have given, he may reasonably doubt whether he and his subjects are to submit to the dictation of a foreign army. So the preparations for war go on—on his side with misgiving and vacillation, on Regan's with a vigour and energy due not merely to her own indomitable spirit, but to Edmund's superintendence. She, too, cherishes an affection for the young earl, whom she regards as the natural successor to her dead husband's

place; and she makes him commander of her forces, as a preliminary step to honouring him with her hand. Thus, we have a further prospect of retribution opened, both in the aroused indignation of Albany, and in the seed of jealousy sown between the two sisters, which easily overpowers the sympathy they have hitherto manifested towards each other, as embarked in the same selfish cause. The miscarriage of their messenger, who, attempting Gloster's life, falls by the hand of Edgar, is another movement in the same direction. We rejoice in the extinction of so much baseness, and we conceive new hopes as we see Edgar armed with the proofs of his brother and Goneril's treachery, which he may use as an instrument for working on the 'death-practised duke.'

So we are brought at length to the Fifth and last Act, in which the problem is to be solved, and the web unravelled. About the first question, the event of the battle, we are not left long in doubt. Regan arrives first with Edmund, on whom she presses her love and her jealousy; and they are speedily joined by Goneril and Albany. As they are going out to marshal their forces, Albany is stopped by Edgar, who, being still in disguise, gives him the paper which proves Goneril's and Edmund's guilt, promising that if the combined armies win the battle, a champion shall appear on his part to substantiate the charge. In a very short time we find that they have won the battle; Lear and Cordelia are taken, and brought in as prisoners by Edmund. Cordelia is resigned to her fate, but grieves for her father, and asks, 'Shall we not see these daughters and these sisters?' But the old king has no such thoughts: he can only think of a life in prison as a life with Cordelia, where they may be happy in each other's company, withdrawn from the flux and reflux of their former fortune, and regard the world

from which they are cut off merely as a theme for pleasant discourse:—

> No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to prison:
> We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage:
> When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down
> And ask of thee forgiveness. So we'll live,
> And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
> At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
> Talk of court news: and we'll talk with them too;
> Who loses, and who wins: who's in, who's out;
> And take upon us the mystery of things,
> As if we were God's spies: and we'll wear out,
> In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones,
> That ebb and flow by the moon.

Edmund, however, has no intention that they shall have a long captivity. He professes to reserve them for Albany's judgment, but gives secret orders to an officer to have them put to death in prison. So they are carried out, and Albany enters with his wife and her sister and the rest of the forces. Albany, after a compliment to Edmund's valour, asks for the prisoners. Edmund excuses himself for their non-appearance, alleging that it is best to keep the king out of sight at a time when public feeling might be stirred in his favour. Albany resents this independence of action, and replies that he holds Edmund 'as a subject of the war, not as a brother.' This calls forth Regan, who intimates her intentions in favour of her lover—at first indirectly, afterwards, in reply to Goneril's questions and taunting comments, by a direct announcement. While the two sisters, not yet avowed rivals, are retorting on each other, and Edmund doubtless in perplexity at being thus called upon to make his election, Albany cuts the knot by producing Edgar's paper, and proclaiming the treachery of his wife and Edmund. He then bids the trumpet sound

for the champion who is to prove the charge, offering himself, if need be, as a substitute. Meanwhile Regan is carried out sick, a whisper from Goneril informing us that she has been poisoned by her sister. The trumpet sounds, and at the third blast it is answered by Edgar himself. Though he will not give his name he is accepted as an antagonist by Edmund, and the two brothers join in mortal combat, in which the traitor falls. Edmund admits his guilt, while Goneril flies from the scene in desperation. Edgar makes himself known, exchanges forgiveness with his brother, and tells how he has tended his father till the old man expired in his arms, and how Kent has been discovered in Lear's faithful servant. And now the strokes of retribution fall thick. An attendant of Goneril's rushes in with a bloody knife, which his lady has just plunged in her own heart, confessing in death that she has poisoned Regan. 'I was contracted to them both,' says Edmund; 'all three now marry in an instant.' One only anxiety remains. If but Lear and Cordelia can be saved, all will be well. Edmund acknowledges that his writ is on their lives, and prays that it may be at once countermanded. But it is too late. Edgar goes, only to return with Lear, who is carrying Cordelia dead in his arms:—

> Howl, howl, howl! O, you are men of stones
> Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so,
> That heaven's vault should crack! She's gone for ever
> I know when one is dead, and when one lives:
> She's dead as earth. Lend me a looking-glass;
> If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,
> Why, then she lives.

The three friends ask each other whether the end of the world is indeed come. Lear thinks he spies a ray of hope:—

This feather stirs: she lives! If it be so,
It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows
That ever I have felt.

Kent presses himself on his old master. The father thinks himself baffled in his attempt to restore his child:—

A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all!
I might have sav'd her; now she's gone for ever!
Cordelia, Cordelia! stay a little. Ha!
What is't thou say'st? Her voice was ever soft,
Gentle, and low—an excellent thing in woman.—
I killed the slave that was a hanging thee.

He then recognises Kent, but cannot identify him with the servant that followed him so faithfully. He is told of the deaths of his elder daughters, but the news makes no impression on him. And then, just as Albany is announcing his intention to resign the crown to him during his life, that life gives way:—

And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no, no life!
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life,
And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more;
Never, never, never, never, never!
Pray you, undo this button: thank you, sir.
Do you see this? Look on her—look—her lips—
Look there, look there!

I have been unwilling to interrupt my brief sketch of this, the concluding part of the play, with anything in the shape of criticism. The crowd of incidents naturally hurries us along with it, without giving us breathing time or pause for thought. Now, however, that it is over, we may be allowed to stop and raise a question. The old story on which Shakspeare founded his tragedy is known to have had, at least in one of its versions, a

very different termination. The triumph of right over wrong is not, as here, chequered and saddened, but pure and unmixed. Lear and Cordelia are not the conquered, but the conquerors in the battle; the old king lives, and is restored to his throne. This version, if not the only one known when Shakspeare wrote, seems at any rate to have been the more popular one. Not only is it found in Holingshed's 'Chronicle,' and in Spenser's 'Faery Queen,' but it forms the subject of a play which was printed in Shakspeare's time, and which seems, as was the case in so many other instances, to have held possession of the theatre till he came to supersede it. Nor is this all. Even after Shakspeare had put forth his conception of the story of Lear, the other version was still found to be congenial to the English taste. About the time of the Revolution, Nahum Tate, a person of some reputation in his day, known to us by his share in the New Version of the Psalms, published a tragedy altered from Shakspeare's 'King Lear,' where, though the battle goes against the king and his daughter, Cordelia is rescued in time and given in marriage to Edgar, who has been her lover throughout. Its success was complete. It superseded the Shakspearian original, and, either in its own form, or in a modification introduced, I believe, by Garrick, was the accepted version at the theatres through the whole of the eighteenth century, and indeed, down to a comparatively late period, in our own. It was, in fact, the form in which I myself, as a boy, first became acquainted with the play. The change pleased not only the people but the critics. Dr. Johnson avows his sympathy with it. 'Cordelia,' he says, 'from the time of Tate, has always retired with victory and felicity. And if my sensations could add anything to the general suffrage, I might relate, I was many years ago so shocked by Cordelia's death, that

I know not whether I ever endured to read again the last scenes of the play till I undertook to revise them as an editor.' With such a consent of authorities on the other side, we may fairly ask why Shakspeare chose to forsake the more popular and acceptable version of the story and follow or invent the more painful. Here, as before, it is not a sufficient answer to point to the alteration, and show, as might easily be done, how far it falls short of the original. Nor is it enough, though the answer is one which goes far more deeply into the merits of the question, to show how Shakspeare has prepared us for the catastrophe, and how impossible it would be to conceive a mind like Lear's, maddened and unhinged by wrong, as brought to any other issue than a comparatively placid and soothing euthanasia. We may be confident that had Shakspeare thought it right that the story should have a happy conclusion, all the lustre of his genius would have been employed to gild the mild evening of the old king's days; nor would he have dreamed, as an inferior writer might, of wounding the sympathies of a rightly-tempered mind merely in order to exhibit the natural evolution of a powerfully-drawn character. No; it was because he knew that the sorrow with which we regard such deaths as Cordelia's and Lear's is really a deeper and nobler feeling than any joy which could be excited by the triumphant conclusion of a story like theirs. It would not be fair, as I have said, to institute a formal comparison between Tate's last scene and Shakspeare's: but we may justly point to the words with which the two respectively conclude, and ask which conveys the higher lesson: Edgar's speech which assures us—

> Whatever storms of fortune are decreed,
> That truth and virtue shall at last succeed;

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or Albany's—

> The weight of this sad time we must obey;
> Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.
> The oldest hath borne most: we that are young
> Shall never see so much, or live so long.

As they are carried off to prison, Lear says to Cordelia:—

> Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,
> The gods themselves throw incense.

And how much would the sacrifice have lost if it had not been consummated? She has given up not only her father's favour and her third of the kingdom, but her life: he has paid the penalty of his miserable error in madness and agony, and death comes to him, not only as his appointed repose, but as the completion of the expiation. Nay, we feel that such a death as theirs is needed, as the only perfect contrast to the doom which falls on the guilty. Cornwall, Regan, Goneril, and in a less degree Edmund, are dead by a judgment which, as Albany says, makes us tremble, but touches us not with pity. Cordelia, Lear, Gloster, and Kent are taken away not in anger but in mercy. Had they lived, their triumph would have been more palpable to apprehension, but less real. By their death, they point the moral of a Providence which, while it frequently visits the guilty with punishment even here, would not have us look upon worldly honours as the most appropriate reward of long-suffering virtue.

It has not seldom been asked, whether or no Shakspeare can be called a Christian poet. So far as the term can be used with any strictness, the answer given, I fear, cannot be in the affirmative. It is not Shakspeare's way to teach anything pointedly or directly: he teaches as life itself

teaches, by example and experience; but the general effect of his plays, though partaking of the Christian atmosphere which may be said more or less to pervade the whole of modern society, stands in no marked relation to the characteristic teaching of the New Testament. But if he cannot be called the Poet of Revelation, he may be spoken of as the Poet of Natural Theology. He shows life as it appears to the unwarped and unperverted observer who loves the right and hates the wrong. There have been writers of power and genius who have deliberately lent themselves to making wickedness attractive; there have been others who, not being themselves masters of the experience of life, have enlisted their readers' feelings on the side of criminal weakness, and requested sympathy for struggles in which failure has been a foreseen thing from the first. Such is not Shakspeare's practical philosophy. Villany and heartlessness with him are objects of abhorrence, generally punished, always represented in their native hideousness; even error and infirmity, though they may excite compassion, do not escape without censure or penalty. These, at any rate, are some of the lessons which we learn from 'King Lear.' It is a school for parents and children, for husbands and wives, for sovereigns and subjects. There is no one-sidedness in its teaching. Those who are under reciprocal obligations are not left to imagine that the failure of either party in his duty exonerates the other. All is impartial, even-handed justice, as if it had been the moral law itself. I do not mean to say that this directly didactic purpose ought to be our only, or even our main, object in the study of Shakspeare. We read his plays ordinarily with a moral purpose, but it is one less directly obviously moral—the purpose of enlarging our conceptions of power, beauty,

and truth—and thus cultivating, as far as its capability extends, that complex nature which God has given us. But there are times when in the course of our general culture it is well that we should be reminded more distinctly and definitely of practical objects, and I am not sorry in closing my lecture to have directed attention for a while to the lessons of moral truth which may be obtained from the study of so great a work of art as 'King Lear.'

LECTURE ON 'HAMLET.'[1]

THREE YEARS ago, when I chose Shakspeare's 'King Lear' as the subject of a lecture, I sincerely felt my choice to be an adventurous, not to call it a presumptuous, one. What, then, must be said of my present subject, which is no other than the play of 'Hamlet?'

I am not intending to undertake, even cursorily, what in itself perhaps would be scarcely a modest attempt, a comparison of two of the greatest works of our great dramatist. I would not venture to assert that the entire tragedy of 'Hamlet' is a nobler, and consequently a less measurable, a more incomprehensible creation than the entire tragedy of 'Lear.' But I believe I am in no danger of being contradicted when I say that of all Shakspeare's characters, Hamlet is the one of which it is hardest to speak worthily. The old joke, so old that it has passed into a proverb, about 'Hamlet' with the part of Hamlet left out, represents the feeling of which I speak. We feel that in the play of 'Hamlet,' more than in any other play, the grand, the commanding interest of the whole, centres in a single character. There is probably no character in the whole range of poetical creation which has tasked so often the utmost resources of the highest criticism. The great poet of modern Germany, himself an eminent critic; the great critic of modern England, himself an eminent poet —Goethe and Coleridge—have each elaborated theories of a conception which, more perhaps than any other,

[1] Delivered at the Boston Athenæum January 4, 1860, and repeated January 6.

seems as if it must have proceeded from a conscious artist, from a genius who was critic and poet in one. Nay, it is possible that there may be a yet deeper interest connected with the character—an interest beyond any which can attach to any mere effort of poetry or criticism. Persons who have wondered, as reflecting persons may well wonder, that Shakspeare should have drawn so many characters and yet have never drawn his own, have thought that Hamlet may perhaps be an exception, and that in the character of the young Hamlet we may have something like the character of the young Shakspeare, as he appeared to himself in that troubled period of thought and feeling of which the 'Sonnets' are doubtless the authentic exhibition. Certainly there is no character which seems so completely to include all others, while it is itself included by none, and consequently in its mysterious complexity to approach so nearly to that yet more complex mystery which imagined not only 'Hamlet' but the entire world of the Shakspearian drama. But I will not proceed with observations the effect of which can only be to set in a clearer light the presumption of which I confess myself guilty in venturing to choose a subject like this. My excuse is the surpassing interest of the play.

Coleridge remarks that of all Shakspeare's plays 'Hamlet' is the slowest in movement, as 'Macbeth' is the most rapid. The observation is meant to apply to the prolonged agony of vacillation and mental irresolution which it is the chief business of the play to exhibit; but it is equally true as applied to one of the most obvious external characteristics of the play—its extraordinary length. The fact is one of which anyone who has been in the habit of reading Shakspeare aloud must be sufficiently aware, and of which anyone may satisfy himself by comparing the pages of 'Hamlet' in any printed volume with those of any

other play. Three or four others come within a page or two of it, but 'Hamlet' is the longest of all. This I mention as a reason for moving myself as rapidly as I can, and without further preamble entering upon the play itself.

' In the first scene we have a platform in front of the royal castle of Elsinore, and soldiers walking up and down, one relieving the other in their nightly guard. It is precisely an opening of that quiet everyday kind which the Roman poet and critic recommended fifteen hundred years before as the only proper way of commencing a great work, and which Shakspeare, led doubtless not by any regard to the precepts of Horace, but by his own sense of fitness, almost habitually affects. We hear the ordinary remarks about the hour, the coldness of the night, the perfect stillness—'not a mouse stirring'—before we are made sensible that anything extraordinary is at hand. And when we *do* get an intimation of what we are to expect, it is made in the most simple and natural manner possible: one asks another, 'What! has this thing appeared again to-night?' We may observe, too, the judgment shown in the gradual process by which the credibility of the vision is brought home to us. The object is to make us see it with the same eyes as the personages in the drama, and especially as Hamlet himself. Consequently our suspicions must be laid artfully to sleep; we must be made to feel that reasonable as they may be in other cases, they would be unreasonable in *this*. That the sentinels who are keeping guard are convinced would not be enough to convince us. Nor should we, I think, be satisfied by simply finding that their convictions were shared by Hamlet, when he came to see for himself. They are credulous from ordinary superstition; he, we might well think, is credulous from over-inquisitiveness; their prejudices are common and trivial to him, but the doubts

by which those prejudices are usually assailed are common and trivial too. One who already finds 'all the uses of this world weary, stale, flat and unprofitable' would be unduly predisposed to accept with favour an alleged message from the other world. It is precisely here that Horatio comes in. He is not a common man—he is a man of education, and has been Hamlet's fellow-student; and so when he first hears of the supposed apparition, his impulse is to doubt it, just as ours would be. Those well-known words in which Hamlet addresses him after both are convinced of the reality of what they have seen :—

> There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
> Than are dreamt of in your philosophy—

those very words show us that Horatio is precisely such a person as most of us would wish to be thought—a person who takes a calm, rational view of things, removed from all extravagance of speculation, and that which triumphs over his doubts may well triumph over ours. This, then, seems to be the great purpose answered by the opening scene. Quietly and without effort, we are led to be as thoroughly convinced of the truth of the Ghost's appearance as the less enlightened persons who first saw it; and instead of being prepared to treat Hamlet as a dreamer who would naturally acquiesce in an impression of anything preternatural, we simply look forward to the effect which a thing confessedly transcending all our experience may be expected to produce on a nature more powerful and deeper than our own.

The next scene introduces us to the king and queen, and to Hamlet himself. The king has lately succeeded his brother, and has married his brother's widow; and we now see him entering on the duties of royalty, providing for State emergencies, and giving audience to

private suitors. With his character and the queen's we need not trouble ourselves at present; they will come before us as the play proceeds. Laertes, too, the young nobleman, and his father, the old politician, will meet us again: at present we need only note, as others have noted, that Shakspeare, intending afterwards to bring Laertes and Hamlet into collision, has taken care at the moment of their first introduction to indicate the opposition between the natures of the two men: both anxious to be allowed to leave the court; the one that he may get back to his pleasures in France, the other that he may return to his studies at Wittenberg. In the case of Hamlet, however, we have little need to dwell, even for a moment, on such slight indications, valuable as they are in illustrating subordinate characters like that of Laertes. Hamlet has but to open his mouth in order to show us that he is unlike those with whom we have hitherto been conversing. As he says of himself, he has 'that within which passeth show.' He is not acquiescent in the state of things about him; he is not even, like Horatio, simply observant and suspicious; he is profoundly distrustful. The great German poet whom I mentioned a short time since has endeavoured to ascertain what was Hamlet's natural temperament—what he was previously to the death of his father and marriage of his mother, and would probably have continued had nothing happened to convulse his being. The question may or may not be a profitable one; at any rate, it is one which Shakspeare does not enable us to approach otherwise than indirectly, as we only see Hamlet after the shadow of that great event has passed over him. But there is a comparison which we are enabled and intended to make—a comparison of Hamlet when he has not yet heard of the Ghost, and Hamlet when he has seen and talked with it. What we observe, indeed, is not

so much the unlikeness as the likeness of the two states of mind. The discovery that in losing his father he has lost his mother too—that she, being apparently anxious merely to preserve her queenly state, has passed lightly and almost without an interval from the arms of a worthy king to those of his unworthy successor—has engendered in him already a weariness of life, a world-sickness, if I may use the expression, which it requires no supernatural communication to aggravate. What he learns from the Ghost afterwards is not so much that he has to suffer, though there *is* an additional ingredient thrown into his cup of suffering, as that he has to *act*.

Hamlet has been told by Horatio of the appearance of the Ghost, and he wishes the night were come, that he might see for himself. It might naturally be supposed that the impatience of the reader or spectator would keep pace with that of the actor, and that the poet would be ready to gratify it. Shakspeare is not circumscribed by any law of unity of time—the action of the play is extended over a number of days; and, so far as its requirements are concerned, he was perfectly free to annihilate the intervening space, and bring Hamlet at once face to face with his father's spirit. Or, if he did not wish to precipitate the crisis, he might have allowed us to accompany Hamlet, and enter with him into all the horror of strained and excited expectation. Instead of this, he introduces us again to Laertes, who, as we have just seen, has obtained leave to go back to France; we are present at the preparations for his journey, hear his parting counsels to his sister, and the other parting counsels which his father, in his turn, administers to him. We are thus made acquainted with a family which, having been long attached to the fortunes of the royal family of Denmark, is doomed, in the sequel, to be involved in the

tragic destiny which drags them down. But this object would not be sufficient to redeem the scene, standing where it does, from the charge of inappropriateness. Its real justification lies even nearer to the surface. We are called off from Hamlet and his expectation precisely because it is well that we should be called off. We obtain that relief without which the contemplation of a work of art would give us more pain than pleasure; and we are also made to realise life as it is. While we acknowledge Hamlet to be the centre of the piece, it is well that we should feel that there are other minor centres, even within the limits of the Danish court. Everyday life cannot stand still, even during those few agonising hours which separate Hamlet from the object of his expectation. The ship is waiting for Laertes, and he must sail whether there be anything rotten in the state of Denmark or no; and our presence at his preparations makes us acknowledge the fact that he has interests as well as Hamlet. We also see something of what Hamlet himself has been, apart from the terrible responsibility which is being now laid upon him. He is not only a prince and a student, but a lover; and though, in the course of the play, we are not made very sensible of his love, we are intended to take notice of it as one of the influences acting on his nature. To what extent it has already mastered him is not easy to say. I do not pretend to reconcile the utter sickness of heart which makes Hamlet cry out on the unprofitableness of all the uses of the world with the tenders of affection which he has of late made to Ophelia, supposing these last to have taken place after his father's death and his mother's marriage. At any rate, the passion is one which cannot but be overpowered by the sense of his situation, as 'the son of a dear father murdered,' the duty of setting right a time

that is out of joint; though he may afterwards feel painfully that Ophelia, too, should have turned against him; may tell her that he loved her once, may taunt her with the brevity of woman's love; and when she is dead, assert that he loved her more than forty thousand brothers. So, perhaps, we may say that there is something tragical in the old man cautioning his daughter against listening to Hamlet's love, just when Hamlet has entered the cold shadow in which all love's blossoms are doomed to wither and die.

And now midnight has come: the watch is set, and Hamlet is with them. At the very outset of the scene there is a contrast, which the poet certainly intended, and we shall do well to observe. While they are in the cold biting air, they hear a flourish of trumpets, and a discharge of cannon, and Hamlet remarks that his uncle is holding a carouse, and drinking deep. The king is at the height of his revelry; his nephew is expecting a communication from the other world. The contrast is the same which the reader of English history will remember, on the night before the battle of Hastings, when the Normans prayed and fasted, and the Saxons ate and drank—an omen, as we instinctively feel it, of the event of the coming day. Shakspeare loses no opportunity of pointing the opposition between this grossness of carnal excess and the purity enforced by the world of spirits. Hamlet's father, as he tells us, was 'cut off in the blossom of his sin'—'grossly, full of bread, with all his crimes broad blown'—and so, in his disembodied state, is condemned 'to fast in fires' till the stains contracted in life 'are burnt and purged away.' The late king was a noble and worthy monarch, yet he has given way to the national vice of intemperance, and so he suffers: what is to be looked for by him whose nature, as deeply, or more deeply steeped in the same

'gross mud-honey,' has on it the far blacker taint of fratricide? As yet, however, the veil has not been lifted up, and Hamlet can speak soberly and calmly about the 'heavy-headed revel,' as a feature lowering to the national character. The speech is one of that numerous class which have made Shakspeare's plays celebrated as a store-house of moral wisdom; yet it is perfectly in keeping: it shows us Hamlet in his sane and more self-contained mood, conversing with a friend whom he loves and esteems, not abandoned to his own despair; and it makes the impression more striking when, just as he ceases, Horatio says, 'Look, my lord, it comes!' Hamlet's tone changes in an instant; his whole nature is called forth to address the spirit, and reflective philosophy is lost in a strain of the loftiest and most impassioned poetry:—

> Angels and ministers of grace defend us!
> Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd;
> Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell;
> Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
> Thou com'st in such a questionable shape
> That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,
> King, Father, Royal Dane: Oh, answer me!
> Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell
> Why thy canonised bones, hearsed in death,
> Have burst their cerements! why the sepulchre
> Wherein we saw thee quietly in-urn'd,
> Hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws
> To cast thee up again! What may this mean,
> That thou, dread corse, again, in complete steel,
> Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
> Making night hideous: and we fools of nature,
> So horridly to shake our disposition,
> With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
> Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

His companions would fain hinder him from following the Ghost; but he will not hear them:—

I do not set my life at a pin's fee:
And for my soul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself?

The dialogue between Hamlet and his father I will not dwell on; everybody that knows anything of Shakspeare is familiar with it already. I will merely notice one or two points which throw light upon Hamlet's character. The whole scope of the play is to represent Hamlet as irresolute: 'from thinking too precisely o'er the event,' he lets the time for action go by; yet he believes himself to be ready to avenge his father's murder the instant he has been informed who the murderer is:—

Haste me to know it, that I with wings as swift
As meditation, or the thoughts of love,
May sweep to my revenge.

So it doubtless is: in his first impulse he is rapid and lightning-like (though even here we are, perhaps, intended to note the two things uppermost in his mind, 'meditation and the thoughts of love'): then the intellectual power wakes, and thought overcrowds and stifles action. Again, when the Ghost leaves him alone, and his tumultuous feelings first find words, he appears vividly conscious of the obstacles he is likely to meet with in his own nature and temperament. It is the dreamy, meditative student that is speaking when he promises:—

Remember thee?
Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
That youth and observation copied there;
And thy commandment all alone shall live,
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmix'd with baser matter—yes, yes, by heaven.

Whether it is to record the Ghost's charge, or the

generalised observation that he draws from what he has just heard, 'that one may smile, and smile, and be a villain'—for whichever of these two purposes it is that he takes out his tables, Coleridge is equally justified in his profound remark that 'Shakspeare alone could have produced the vow of Hamlet, to make his memory a blank of all maxims and generalised truths . . . followed immediately by the speaker noting down a generalised fact'—a subtle inconsistency, which shows, indeed, how thoroughly the creator of the character had realised his own creation. So, too, there can be no doubt that Coleridge is right in saying that when Hamlet resolves, as he does immediately, to counterfeit madness, 'he plays the trick of pretending to act only when he is very near really being what he acts.' Hamlet's feigning madness, indeed, is a sort of instinct of self-preservation. He resolves not to speak of what he has seen; and if he is to keep it to himself, his only chance lies in not brooding over it, but diverting himself from it—not shaping his language cautiously, but flashing out his thoughts as they rise to his lips, and running an intellectual riot, such as only the supposition of madness could justify in the eyes of the world. At the first moment he seems to think of telling the secret to Horatio and Marcellus; but his mind changes: he attempts to generalise, to say something which shall yet be nothing; he falls into a truism and owns it, laughing apparently at himself; 'and so, without more circumstance at all, he holds it fit that they shake hands and part.' These, as Horatio tells him, 'are but wild and hurling words;' but it is only in some such words as these that the overwrought spirit can find natural vent.

In the Second Act we see much of a personage who has hitherto played but a subordinate part in the drama. I mean Polonius, an old and trusted counsellor of State,

father of Laertes and Ophelia. His is a character which presents a good deal of difficulty. Hamlet dislikes and contemns him; but if we judge him by his own speeches, as Shakspeare must have intended us to do, we shall find, setting aside a certain tedious formality on the one hand, and traces of superannuation on the other, that he is a good specimen of a type which is unquestionably entitled to our respect, the old practised politician. The first writer who set his character in a true light was, I believe, Dr. Johnson, whose remarks, truly called by a subsequent critic 'just, judicious, and masterly,' I will venture to quote at length:—'Polonius is a man bred in courts, exercised in business, stored with observation, confident in his knowledge, proud of his eloquence, and declining into dotage. His mode of oratory is truly represented as designed to ridicule the practice of those times, of prefaces that made no introduction, and of method that embarrassed rather than explained. This part of his character is accidental: the rest is natural. Such a man is positive and confident, because he knows that his mind was once strong, and knows not that it is become weak. Such a man excels in general principles, but fails in the particular application. He is knowing in retrospect, and ignorant in foresight. While he depends on his memory, and can draw from his repositories of knowledge, he utters weighty sentences, and gives useful counsel; but as the mind in its enfeebled state cannot be kept long busy and intent, the old man is subject to sudden dereliction of his faculties: he loses the order of his ideas, and entangles himself in his own thoughts, till he recovers the leading principle, and falls again into his former train. This idea of dotage encroaching upon wisdom will solve all the phenomena of the character of Polonius.' In the first scene he is sending a messenger to his son, with secret instructions to enquire

about his way of life in Paris; and there we see the old man trusting partly to his memory, partly to a certain formal sequence of thoughts, to supply the failing of his faculties, while the general result, allowance being made for a little pomp and self-consciousness, is wise and sagacious. Ophelia enters, and the question of Hamlet's relation to her is resumed. His madness, real or supposed, has shown itself in a strange interview with her; the old man is alarmed, and fears that the course of conduct which he had prescribed on the supposition that the prince's passion was a momentary fancy has had the effect of inflaming that passion into an insanity of which he now sees the cause. The next scene shows us the king and queen, who have been pondering on the same subject of Hamlet's madness, now evident to the whole court. They have sent for two of Hamlet's friends, Rosencranz and Guildenstern, and are receiving from them assurances that they will do their best to trace the evil to its source. After these noblemen have been dismissed, Polonius comes in with the announcement of his discovery, which is gladly welcomed. His self-importance is considerable, and the absurdity of his methodical style of oratory rather irritates the queen, who exclaims, 'More matter with less art;' while we may smile at the pardonable vanity which makes him suppose he understands Hamlet's madness, not only in the general, but in detail:—

> And he, repulsed (a short tale to make),
> Fell into a sadness; then into a fast;
> Thence to a watch; thence into a weakness;
> Thence to a lightness; and by this declension,
> Into the madness wherein now he raves,
> And all we wail for.

Hamlet appears, and the old politician begs to be left alone with him: he is no match, however, for the 'wild

and hurling words' in which Hamlet, using a madman's privilege, expresses his contempt for him, and he retires; not, however, without doing justice to the pregnancy of the prince's replies, in which, he observes, madness often has the advantage of reason and sanity. Rosencranz and Guildenstern are introduced. Hamlet is at first inclined to welcome them on the score of old friendship; and seems even to be preparing to take them into his confidence: —'O God! I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have had bad dreams.' They misunderstand him, and he begins to see that they are set as spies upon him. Yet, though he does not tell the cause of his melancholy, he gives a picture of it, in words which, though Shakspeare has chosen to throw them into prose, have all the characteristics of the highest poetry:—'I have of late (but wherefore I know not) lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving, how express and admirable! in action, how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me; no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.' They tell him his old favourites, the players, are on their way to court: Hamlet shows that his interest in them is not dead; and a conversation ensues which is curious for its obvious reference to the caprices of the

popular taste about actors in Shakspeare's own time. Polonius returns, bringing the same information about the players, which he flatters himself will be welcome. Hamlet is more disrespectful to the old man than ever—interrupts him, mimics his words, twits him with his stale intelligence, and plies him with scraps of songs glancing indirectly at his daughter. The players enter: Hamlet welcomes them, and calls for a favourite speech about the sack of Troy and the murder of Priam, which is given with great effect, partly by himself, partly by one of the actors. A thought strikes Hamlet: he knows a play on a subject closely resembling his father's murder, and he will have it performed the next night. The thing is arranged, and he is left alone, and then his pent-up thoughts break out:—

> Oh, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
> Is it not monstrous, that this player here,
> But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
> Could force his soul so to his whole conceit,
> That, from her working, all his visage wann'd;
> Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,
> A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
> With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!
> For Hecuba!
> What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
> That he should weep for her? What would he do
> Had he the motive and the cue for passion
> That I have? He would drown the stage with tears,
> And cleave the general ear with horrid speech;
> Make mad the guilty, and appal the free;
> Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
> The very faculties of eyes and ears.

He contrasts his own miserable apathy, execrates his uncle, and then upbraids himself again for 'unpacking his heart with words,' when he ought to be doing.

Summoning his thoughts, he thinks the play may be made a good expedient for bringing out his uncle's guilt. After all, a supernatural appearance is no absolute proof of the truth of its own communication. It may be a spirit of evil, working on that weakness and melancholy of which Hamlet is but too conscious. Far better to take the opportunity, thus accidentally presented, of arriving at the truth:—

> The play's the thing
> Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

And so the Act ends, leaving Hamlet satisfied with his own procrastination, which has thus brought him the means of feeling his way before he acts.

Rosencranz and Guildenstern inform the king and queen of their ill success with Hamlet, telling them also of his wish to see the players perform. They gladly clutch at this disposition, as they think, to seek relief in amusement, and promise to be present themselves. Meanwhile the truth of Polonius' theory, that it is love of Ophelia that has driven Hamlet mad, is to be put to the test. Ophelia is to be thrown in Hamlet's way, her father and the king being hidden where they can make their own observations, while the queen expresses her gracious wish that Ophelia's beauties may prove the happy cause of her son's wildness. They retire, leaving Ophelia. Hamlet enters, talking to himself. I need not relate what he is saying: it is that marvellous speech, the best known in the whole play, perhaps in the whole of Shakspeare, where he raises the question 'to be or not to be.' I shall neither quote it nor abridge it, but merely make one or two remarks on it by way of comment. Hamlet, in his very first soliloquy, had wished 'that the Everlasting had not fixed his canon 'gainst self-slaughter.' This was

when, as I said a short time ago, he was wholly absorbed in the thought of suffering, and did not know that there was a call on him to act. But the occasion for acting is a new cause of grief, and so, to his tortured and agonised mind, is the call itself: the procrastination, which appeared to ease it, has in reality made it more painful. He seeks to escape from the burden; and accordingly once more he considers the question of self-murder, approaching it this time in a spirit of profound, and, so far as his nature will allow, calm meditation, and enquiring into the reasons why men do not commit a crime that they are so often tempted to. We all know the answer to which he comes—an answer, I may remark in passing, all the more significant as coming, not from a moralist, but from a sufferer at the height of his suffering, But the answer is one which reaches beyond its original application. In saying that 'conscience does make cowards of us all,' Hamlet, as has been well remarked by a recent critic, comes upon 'the key to the tendency to hesitation, where momentous action is' required, 'in every other case.' 'He has at last' (I am quoting the same authority) 'got the clue to his own state of mind, or rather to his whole being:'—

> Thus the native hue of resolution
> Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;
> And enterprises of great pith and moment,
> With this regard, their currents turn awry,
> And lose the name of action.

As he is speaking, he sees Ophelia: his first words are those of tender regard; but he immediately suspects that she, like the others, is set on to spy him, and he lets loose against her the same tongue which he had let loose against her father. There is sincerity in each case: feel-

ing, as he does, that the uses of the world are weary, flat and unprofitable, and the time out of joint, he sees as keenly the frivolities of young women as he sees the infirmities of old men; and when he says—'I have heard of your paintings too, well enough: God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another: you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nickname God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to; I'll no more on't: it hath made me mad'—when he says this, it is simply the outcome of an experience which weighed little or nothing with him so long as he could allow himself to be a happy lover, but now oppresses and revolts him. Ophelia, conscious of her innocence, receives his words only as so many proofs of the utter completeness of a calamity which she bewails most touchingly, not for her own sake, but for his. The scene has had a different effect on the king: he sees nothing of love in Hamlet's words, and no madness either, and so purposes to send him on a mission to England. The old counsellor assents, though with a reserve in favour of his own opinion about the origin of the distemper, suggesting as a previous step that after the play the queen shall be closeted with Hamlet, he himself being set to watch the conversation. The players come on, and Hamlet, who has been instructing them in their parts, delivers some injunctions about acting generally, which are doubtless the result of Shakspeare's own judgment and dramatic experience, and have been household words with English critics ever since. Then they are dismissed to get the exhibition ready, and Hamlet has a few words with Horatio in anticipation of the play. 'Horatio,' he tells him, in a speech which is a model of what friend may say of friend, testifying to the worth of him who gives the praise as much as to that of him who receives it:—

Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation coped withal.

. . . . . .

Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice,
And could of men distinguish, her election
Hath seal'd thee for herself: for thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing;
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast ta'en with equal thanks: and blest are those
Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled
That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core—aye, in my heart of heart,
As I do thee.

Being such as he is, he has been taken into Hamlet's confidence about the murder, and now promises to observe the king's behaviour. The royal party enter: Hamlet taunts the king with having done nothing to advance him, jeers at the old counsellor to his face, and finally gives himself up to Ophelia, on whom he vents a wayward and, as we must consider it, a coarse humour. The play commences—a somewhat stilted and unnatural performance to our tastes; the player-king and queen making love to each other in long rhyming speeches, full of antithetical sentences; but we must remember that it is a play within a play, and that Shakspeare had to discriminate it from the free natural dialogue of his own characters by artificial language and an obviously balanced metre. Then comes the crisis: as the player-king is asleep, his nephew pours poison into his ears; Hamlet, who professes to have studied the story, taking care to inform the spectators what the action is, in case it should not speak for itself. The real king rises: the spectacle is broken up; and Hamlet is left with Horatio.

Hamlet has, as it were, attained an intellectual triumph, which he is disposed to enjoy, and Horatio humours him. They are interrupted by Rosencranz and Guildenstern, who come to report that the king is in high displeasure, and that the queen is anxious to see Hamlet in her own chamber. Hamlet answers them lightly; and on Guildenstern's pressing to be admitted into his confidence, intimates in plain terms that he will not let himself be made an instrument for pretended friends to play on. Polonius enters with the same message: Hamlet answers by pointing to a cloud, which he makes him admit successively to be like a camel, a weasel, and a whale. He has apparently two objects in this, not strictly consistent with each other, but both consistent with the bitterness of his own spirit: to make the old man eat his own words, showing him thus that he thoroughly understands his courtier-like nature, and to evidence to himself how he himself is regarded as a lunatic whom no one contradicts: 'They fool me to the top of my bent.' And now he believes himself wrought up to the deed of vengeance; but first he must see his mother. Meantime the king arranges to send Hamlet to England with Rosencranz and Guildenstern, Rosencranz accepting the charge in a speech which I have not time to quote, but which is well worthy of your attention, both for its own sake—for it is a splendid acknowledgment of the paramount importance of royalty, soaring far above anything like vulgar flattery—and as affording an instance of what I may call the fearless justice and truthfulness of Shakspeare, who, while preserving the prominence of one commanding character, is not afraid to give others their full scope, but allows them to utter noble sentiments in noble language, even though he does not mean us, on the whole, to respect or approve them. Hamlet is on his

way to the queen; the king, conscience-stricken, attempts to pray before he goes to rest. I cannot stop to point out the marvellous power shown in pourtraying the agonising self-conflict of the guilty man, knowing that mercy is infinite and may extend even to him, but feeling that he cannot place himself within the range of that mercy by repentance and restitution. I will only say how thoroughly I agree with Coleridge that Hamlet's unwillingness to kill his uncle while praying, which must have shocked many readers, as it certainly once shocked me, is not really a deliberate expression of fiendish malice, but the result of irresolution seeking an excuse for itself in a thought which, however frightful, is never intended to be more than a thought. Hamlet's interview with his mother has a very different ending from that which she and her advisers anticipated. It opens with the death of the unfortunate old counsellor, who, having ensconced himself behind the tapestry, suffers by mistake the death which Hamlet, as able to act on impulse as he is unable to act on deliberation, intends for the king. The queen had flattered herself that she should be able to command Hamlet and bring his unreasonable conduct home to him; in an instant she finds her nature cowed and subjected by his, and has to sit and listen to representations of her unworthy life with her new husband, which pierce her to the heart and call forth her better self. Altogether, the effect of this scene is to make us feel kindly and compassionately towards the queen, and induce us to be glad that the Ghost enjoined Hamlet to spare her. Whether she was really cognisant of her first husband's murder, either before or after the fact, is not altogether easy to say. We know that in Shakspeare's original draught she was made to avow her innocence and co-operate with Hamlet in taking measures

against the king; so that the omission may seem as if on second thoughts it was intended that she should be implicated in the crime. On the other hand, there is strong evidence for her in the fact that, except a single expression, which shocks and astonishes her, Hamlet's reproaches are entirely directed to the infamy of her second marriage; though this is perhaps counterbalanced by the fact that, in a former speech, Hamlet appears distinctly to warn himself against the temptation to kill her, which could hardly have entered his mind if her only crime had been accepting the hand of an unworthy successor to her husband. Again, it is hard to say whether Shakspeare is chargeable with inconsistency in not allowing her to see the Ghost, which has already been shown not to be the mere coinage of Hamlet's brain by appearing to others besides him. But whatever may be the physical explanation of this apparent inconsequence, there can be no doubt that Shakspeare is justified morally in excluding her from the sight of what has stirred Hamlet so powerfully. What he evidently intends is that she should be left to the operation of her own conscience, acting, not on what she does not know, but on what she knows only too well. That is the way in which her moral deliverance is to be accomplished, if at all:—'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.'

The king finds the queen deeply agitated; but she simply tells him that Hamlet is mad, and that he has slain the poor old man. The king is troubled—troubled at what may happen to himself from Hamlet's real or feigned wildness, and troubled at the possible consequences of the murder of an officer of State within the royal house. He concludes to carry out at once the resolution he had formed, and to send Hamlet to England, with secret in-

structions, of which we now hear for the first time, to have him put to death on landing. Hamlet has already suspected that the king may intend some treachery by this mission to England, and, characteristically enough, accepts the charge on that very account, seeing in it an opportunity of a fresh intellectual triumph for himself, as he has no doubt that he shall be able 'to delve one yard below their mines and blow them at the moon.' Accordingly, while taunting Rosencranz to his face as the king's sponge, and hurling sarcasms against royalty at the king himself, he simply asks whither he is to go, and then sets about the journey cheerfully and eagerly. All this is of course mere irresolution, taking refuge from the great duty which presses on it in a new display of ingenuity, as if he wished that his enemies should afford him some sport before he destroys them. This is not as apparent to himself as it is to us; but he is nevertheless pricked by a sense of his own procrastination, in an incident which happens to him as he is going. It is doubtful whether the scene is or is not part of the play as Shakspeare finally left it, as it is omitted in the first folio, the edition which appeared immediately after Shakspeare's death; but there is no doubt that it proceeded from Shakspeare's hand. As Hamlet is going, he meets with a Norwegian army, which has obtained leave to march through the Danish territory on an expedition against Poland. On enquiry, he learns that the prize of war is 'a little patch of ground, which hath no profit in it but the name;' yet both sides are going to squander blood and treasure in attacking or defending it. Hamlet, moralising as usual, at first treats a war like this, as well he may, as 'the imposthume of much wealth and peace;' but as he goes on he is led to admire the daring of these men and their leader, and to contrast it with

his own supineness, though he has far stronger reasons for action:—

> Rightly to be great,
> Is not to stir without great argument,
> But greatly to find quarrel in a straw,
> When honour's at the stake. How stand I, then,
> That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
> Excitements of my reason and my blood,
> And let all sleep? while, to my shame, I see
> The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
> That, for a fantasy and trick of fame,
> Go to their graves like beds—fight for a plot
> Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause;
> Which is not tomb enough and continent
> To hide the slain? Oh, from this time forth
> My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!

Meantime, the deed of blood which Hamlet has already committed is breeding misery to friend and enemy alike. The plague of madness, in counterfeiting which he has found a refuge for his own wild thoughts, has seized on her whom he loved and whom he has just made fatherless. We see her 'fantastically dressed with straws and flowers,' and hear her singing snatches of songs in which the loss of her father blends strangely with her love for Hamlet, and with the warning, so harsh to the ears of a pure-minded maiden, which she received from her father and her brother about the possible consequences of that love to herself. Her brother is brought back from Paris by the news of their father's death, and the popular feeling of Denmark, which had gathered round Hamlet while he was in the country, now attaches itself to him. While the king is conferring of these troubles with the queen, a noise is heard at the gates, and Laertes presents himself, at the head of a rabble. It is then that we see that the king is something more than a mere

sensualist, usurper, and murderer. He is all these; but Shakspeare, with that fearless justice of which I spoke a short time back, has allowed him the royal virtue of dignified intrepidity; and, as he confronts Laertes, he utters one of those sentences about the essential sacredness of the monarch which have made Shakspeare dear to all loyal enthusiasts, from the old cavalier in 'Woodstock' downwards. Confident in his power to satisfy Laertes, he lets his expressions of indignation have their way before he proceeds to show him by calm reasoning that the fault is Hamlet's, and that he, no less than Laertes, is interested in Hamlet's punishment. While he is hinting to him how he has contrived to have Hamlet taken out of the way, unexpected news arrives from Hamlet himself, who has met with an adventure on his voyage, and returned to Denmark. Astonished as the king is, he takes advantage of the occasion to show his confidence in Laertes, whose advice he asks under these new circumstances. Laertes, confused, and thinking only of his own revenge, can originate nothing; and so the king proceeds to unfold a plan which has suggested itself on the moment to his cooler brain. He lets Laertes know that Hamlet is jealous of his reported skill in fencing, taking care, with masterly adroitness, to speak of the real or supposed occasion of that jealousy in a way which shall at once seem most credible to Laertes and most flatter his vanity. Laertes is led on to convert his wild thoughts of indefinite vengeance into a deliberate scheme for murdering Hamlet in a fencing match. He even improves upon the king's suggestion, by proposing to poison his rapier; and the king, not to be outdone, says that he will have a poisoned cup ready for Hamlet to drink when he is tired of the sport. Perhaps it is to soften these horrors and recall our minds to Laertes'

grounds of provocation, that we, like them, are interrupted by the news of the death of poor Ophelia, who, having gone with her fantastic garlands to the brook and attempted to hang them on a willlow, has fallen into the water, and, after floating awhile, been drawn under and drowned, with the 'snatches of old tunes' still in her mouth. Laertes breaks away in a passion of tears, and the king follows, fearing that his rage will blaze out again. And so we come to the end of the Fourth Act. We know that Hamlet has returned without his watchers, and guess that he has found some means of accomplishing his plan, and 'hoisting them with their own petard;' but we know that his enemies, old and new, have been acting in concert, and that the snare is again set for his life. The sky is heavy with thunderclouds, and we wait anxiously to see whether they will burst or pass over.

The Fifth Act opens with the preparations for the funeral of Ophelia, which is intended not to be hurried over, like her father's, but performed with more or less of solemn ceremony. Yet in the preparations, at all events, Shakspeare may seem to have done his utmost to disregard and set at nought our notions of tragic solemnity. It is the celebrated grave digging scene, much hated of Voltaire and his school of criticism, and omitted by Garrick in his representation of the play. Properly considered, it is only an additional instance of Shakspeare's intense reality and depth of feeling. The two clowns are discussing 'crowner's quest law' with an absurd formality which, as the commentators show us, is only a caricatured imitation of the style of their superiors, the old lawyers, and plying each other with riddles about their own trade. Hamlet enters with Horatio, and is at once struck by this apparently gross insensibility: 'Hath this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making?'

He is reminded of the power of custom to dull and deaden impressions, and is led to think of the terrible equality introduced by death: sculls of those who were esteemed in life—politicians, courtiers, lawyers—tossed about by the spade of an ignorant sexton: 'How the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jawbone, that did the first murder!' He bandies jokes with the clown, from whom he hears the popular version of his own madness. He is shown a scull of one whom he used to play with as a child, the court jester, and realises yet more keenly the havoc made by death: 'To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander till we find it stopping a bung-hole?' This is the moral of the scene, the ruthless levelling of worldly distinctions in the grave, and no tragic pomp of language could have conveyed it half so forcibly. All this time Hamlet is unaware whose grave is being got ready. The funeral procession advances, and from the abridgment of the ceremonial he gathers that the corpse is one of a suicide who in life enjoyed some worldly consideration. He recognises Laertes, who at last speaks of his sister, and then the truth breaks on Hamlet: 'What, the fair Ophelia!' The sight of the passionate grief of Laertes, who leaps madly into the grave, provokes Hamlet: he will not have it supposed that a brother could have so much right in the dead as a lover; so he follows the example, and a scuffle ensues. The king parts them with some trouble, solacing himself and Laertes by a reference to their last conversation, which gives a hope shortly of 'an hour of quiet.'—When we next see Hamlet, he has been talking to Horatio, whom he now tells, what we have for some time been anxious to hear, the story of the interruption of his voyage. The night of their starting he was troubled

with restlessness—a providential restlessness, as he himself regards it; finding Rosencranz and Guildenstern asleep, he opened their commission, and learned what was intended against himself; whereon he sat down and wrote a commission, substituting their names for his own, and sealed it with a copy of his father's royal signet, which providentially, as he again says, he happened to have by him. The next day they were attacked by a pirate: during the fight, Hamlet boarded the enemy alone, and was carried off by them, when he induced them to land him in Denmark. 'So,' as Horatio observes, 'Guildenstern and Rosencranz go to 't.' Here, then, is another reason to stir Hamlet to vengeance against his uncle: and accordingly he is minded to strike before the news from England shows that the treachery has been penetrated. Meanwhile the king on his part is preparing to strike at once. One of the courtiers is sent to Hamlet to arrange about the fencing match with Laertes—an office which he performs in the most approved euphuistic style of the day. Hamlet plays upon him, as usual; jeers him; overwhelms him with euphuism of a yet choicer absurdity than his own, but eventually consents to the match—all the more readily, perhaps, as he feels that he has done Laertes some wrong by his violence at the grave. Left alone with Horatio, Hamlet expresses his confidence of success, adding, however, 'But thou would'st not think how ill all's here about my heart; but it is no matter.' Horatio urges him to yield to the presentiment, offering to make his excuses to the king; but Hamlet will not: 'Not a whit; we defy augury: there's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all. Since no man has ought of what he leaves, what is 't to leave betimes?'

The king, queen, and courtiers enter the hall, and the preparations are made for the match. It is to be a courteous and chivalrous trial of skill, and so the king commences by reconciling the combatants. Hamlet offers his apologies to Laertes, which Laertes accepts, with a reservation about the point of honour. The rapiers are chosen, Laertes of course taking care to choose the one which has been prepared for his purpose. The king performs his part, ordering cups of wine to be set on the table, that, if Hamlet should obtain any advantage, he may pledge him royally, the event being announced to the city by the firing of cannon. They play, and the advantage is soon gained; the king drinks, but Hamlet will not yet. A second bout is called for: Hamlet again has some superiority; and the queen, interested in the game, offers to pledge her son. He still will not drink; but she has drunk already: the king, who has in vain tried to hinder her, exclaiming aside, 'It is the poisoned cup.' At the third bout, Laertes, who has hitherto reserved himself, puts forth his skill: Hamlet is not only touched, but wounded: a scuffle ensues: the rapiers are exchanged, and Laertes is wounded too. And now the crisis comes, all in a moment. The queen falls, crying out that she is poisoned. Hamlet orders the door to be locked. Laertes, who has fallen himself, in a very few words explains that the queen is poisoned and himself and Hamlet mortally wounded, and that the king is at the bottom of it all. Hamlet, with Laertes' rapier in his hand, stabs the king. The queen is dead already; the king dies almost instantly; Laertes follows them in a few moments, having begged Hamlet to exchange forgiveness. Hamlet would fain explain the whole tragedy to the horror-stricken spectators, but he finds himself dying, and commits the charge to Horatio, conquering his wish

to follow his friend in death by reminding him that, if Horatio dies, no one will be left to tell the story and clear Hamlet's name. Even while Hamlet is dying, the noise of cannon announces that the ambassadors from England and the Norwegian army from Poland have returned at the same moment. But the poison is too swift, and he dies, recommending with his last breath that the Norwegian prince, who has already some claim, be chosen as his successor to the Danish crown. The Norwegians and the English ambassadors enter, to find that the ears which should give them hearing are senseless. Rosencranz and Guildenstern are dead; but we hear the fate of the tools with unconcern, now that we have lost those who played with them. Horatio undertakes to explain all, begging that the bodies may be placed on a conspicuous stage, that all may see. The Norwegian prince, who already assumes the command, gives orders accordingly, and directs that Hamlet's body in particular be carried with martial honours, paying a brief tribute to the virtues which he would have shown, had he lived to wear the crown. And so 'exeunt, with a dead march.'

Such is the end of what is most truly called 'the tragical history of Hamlet.' As in the last scene of 'King Lear,' we are stunned and confounded by the number of deaths, crowding on each other in the space of a few moments. The blood-guilty and the avenger of blood, the traitors and their victim, fall one after another, till the survivors seem all too few to bury the dead. 'This quarry,' cries the Norwegian Prince:—

> This quarry cries on havoc. Oh, proud death!
> What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,
> That thou so many princes at a shoot
> So bloodily hast struck?

The general result of the play is summed up by Horatio

himself, when he offers to 'speak to the yet unknowing world, how these things came about':—

> So shall you hear
> Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts;
> Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters;
> Of deaths put on by cunning, and forced cause;
> And, in this upshot, purposes mistook,
> Fallen on the inventors' heads: all this can I
> Truly deliver.

Yet this, though expressing, as I have said, the general result of the action, as it appears to one who has been half actor, half spectator, is far from expressing the interest which the play has for us. What gives this terrible story of crime upon crime, avenged by chance medley, its profound importance in our eyes, is its connexion with the character of Hamlet. We see a strong nature paralysed in action by an intellect of extraordinary subtlety and a sensibility of extraordinary keenness; unbounded fertility of resource is employed not to expedite the doing of the great deed, but to retard it, by discovering other things, invisible to a less acute perception, which must apparently be done first: that energy which should have thrown off the burden is expended in estimating its weight and realising its pressure; and when the spell is broken—as it is at last—it is broken by the sudden discovery that the time for deliberation is past for ever, and the time for action all but over. It is from Laertes, a dying man, that Hamlet, a dying man, learns what he has to do:—

> It is here, Hamlet. Hamlet, thou art slain;
> No medicine in the world can do thee good;
> In thee there is not half an hour of life:
> The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,
> Unbated and envenom'd; the foul practice

Hath turn'd itself on me. Lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again: thy mother's poison'd—
I can no more—the king, the king's to blame.

Those few seconds, aided by the working of the poison, have done what could not be done by days of self-communing and parleying with others. Yet, nevertheless, it is that self-communing and parleying with others that have made Hamlet what he is to us. I will not attempt to draw out the lessons which may be learnt from this wonderful exhibition of human character and human life. It would be vain to enumerate where the features are so many and complex; vain to classify where each reader is likely to form a different estimate of their relative importance. Let it suffice to say, that probably there is no play of Shakspeare which requires study so much and repays it so well. It is the opportunity which I have had for such study that has been my chief satisfaction in the composition of the lecture which I now bring to an end.

THE ENGLISH TRANSLATORS OF VIRGIL.[1]

To attempt an exhaustive account of all the translations of the whole or parts of Virgil which have been made in English is a task which would exceed our own opportunities, as it probably would the wishes of our readers. Many of these productions are doubtless unknown to us: with others we are acquainted by name or by character, but they do not happen to be within our reach. It is obvious, too, that there must be a considerable number which do not deserve even the slender honour of a passing commemoration. Here, as elsewhere, something will depend on the date and consequent rarity of the book. A worthless translation of the nineteenth century calls for no mention at all; the work can be procured without difficulty, or the reader, if he pleases, can himself produce something of the same character. A worthless translation of the sixteenth century has an adventitious value: it is probably rare, and, at any rate, the power of producing anything similar is gone for ever. While, therefore, we do not cater for professed antiquaries, we may, perhaps, hope to interest those who care to see how Virgil has fared at the hands of writers, great and small, belonging to the various schools of English poetry—who, for the sake of a few instances of beauty and ingenuity, will pardon a good deal of quaintness, and even some dulness, and are not too severe to smile at occasional

[1] Reprinted from the *Quarterly Review*, July 1861.

passages of rampant extravagance and undisguised absurdity.

A very few words are all that need be spent on the first translation of Virgil into English by Caxton. The title, or rather tail-piece, runs as follows: 'Here fynyssheth the boke of Eneydos, compyled by Vyrgyle, whiche hathe be translated oute of latyne in to frenshe, And oute of frenshe reduced in to Englysshe by me Wyllm̃ Caxton the xxii. daye of Iuyn, the yeare of our lorde m.iiii. clxxxx. The fythe yeare of the Regne of Kynge Henry the seuenth.' Some account of the original work (by Guillaume de Roy) may be found in Warton's 'History of English Poetry,' Section xxiv. It seems, in fact, to be a romance made out of the 'Æneid' by numerous excisions and some additions, the bulk of the whole being comparatively small. We have only glanced at the translation, the printing as well as the language of which is calculated to repel all but black-letter students; but its chief characteristic seems to be excessive amplification of the Latin. This is apparently the version of Virgil's two lines ('Æn.' iv. 9, 10):—

> Anna soror, quæ me suspensam insomnia terrent?
> Quis novus hic nostris successit sedibus hospes?

Anne my suster and frende I am in ryghte gret thoughte strongely troubled and incyted, by dremes admonested whiche excyte my courage tenquire the maners & lygnage of this man thus valyaunt, strong, & puyssaunt, whiche deliteth hym strongely to speke, in deuysing the hie fayttes of armes and perillys daungerous whiche he sayth to haue passed, neweli hither comyn to soiourne in our countreys. I am so persuaded of grete admonestments that all my entendement is obfusked, endullyd and rauysshed.

It was not long before Caxton was to meet with one

who proved himself both a severe critic and a successful rival. This was 'the Reverend Father in God, Mayster Gawin Douglas, Bishop of Dunkel, and unkil to the Erle of Angus,' whose 'xiii Bukes of Eneados of the famose Poete Virgill translatet out of Latyne verses into Scottish metir,' though not published till 1553, was written forty years earlier. In the poetical preface to this work—a composition of some five hundred lines—there is a long paragraph, entitled in the margin 'Caxtoun's faultes,' which passes in review the various delinquencies of the father of printing; his omission of the greater part of the 'thre first bukis,' his assertion that the storm in Book I. was sent forth by Æolus *and Neptune*, the 'prolixt and tedious fassyoun' in which he deals with the story of Dido, his total suppression of the Fifth Book, his ridiculous rejection of the descent into the shades as fabulous, his confusion of the Tiber with the Tover, his substitution of Crispina for Deiphobe as the name of the Sibyl, the whole being summed up by the assurance that—

> His buk is na mare like Virgil, dar I lay,
> Than the nyght oule resemblis the papingay.

The Bishop's own version has been highly praised by competent judges, and we think deservedly. One specimen we will give, and it shall be from the exordium of Book I.:—

> The battellis and the man I will discriue,
> Fra Troyis boundis first that fugitiue
> By fate to Italie come and coist lauyne,
> Ouer land and se cachit with meikill pyne
> By force of goddis aboue fra euery stede
> Of cruel Iuno throw auld remembrit feid:
> Gretê payne in batelles sufferit he also
> Or he his goddis brocht in Latio

And belt the ciete, fra quham of nobil fame
The latyne peopill taken has thare name,
And eke the faderis, princis of Alba,
Come, and the walleris of grete Rome alsua.

The reader of these lines will not fail to remark their general closeness to the original, at the same time that he will be struck with a certain diffuseness, such as seems to be an inseparable adjunct of all early poetry. To expect that such rude and primitive workmanship should represent adequately Virgil's peculiar graces would, of course, be absurd; but the effort was a great one for the time when it was made, and our northern neighbours may well be proud of it.

Not less marked, though not altogether of the same character, is the interest attaching to the next translation, or rather fragment of translation. The Earl of Surrey may or may not have died too soon for the political well-being of England, but his fate was undoubtedly an untimely one for her literature, and the historian who denies his claim to our sympathy expressly acknowledges his 'brilliant genius.'[1] His version, which embraces the Second and Fourth Books of the 'Æneid,' deserves attention, not only for its own sake, but as the first known specimen of English blank verse. As might be expected, the versification is not entitled to any very high positive praise. It is languid and monotonous, and sometimes unmetrical and inharmonious; but the advance upon Gawin Douglas is very perceptible. The language is chiefly remarkable for its purity and simplicity; occasionally there is a forcible expression, but in general a uniform medium is kept, and a modern reader will still complain a little of prolixity, though he will acknowledge

[1] Froude's *Hist. of England*, vol. iv. p. 509.

that the fault is being gradually corrected. Dr. Nott has remarked that some parts of the translation are more highly-wrought than others; and while he draws attention to the fact that Surrey has frequently copied Douglas, whose work must have been known to him in MS., he notes that these obligations are much more frequent in the Second Book than in the Fourth. The following extract (we quote from Dr. Nott's edition) will, perhaps, give an adequate notion of Surrey's manner ('Æn.' ii. 228, 'Tum vero tremefacta,' &c.):—

> New gripes of dread then pierce our trembling breasts.
> They said, Lacon's deserts had dearly bought
> His heinous deed, that pierced had with steel
> The sacred bulk, and thrown the wicked lance.
> The people cried with sundry greeing shouts
> To bring the horse to Pallas' temple blive,
> In hope thereby the goddess' wrath to appease.
> We cleft the walls and closures of the town,
> Whereto all help, and underset the feet
> With sliding rolls, and bound his neck with ropes.
> This fatal gin thus overclamb our walls,
> Stuft with arm'd men; about the which there ran
> Children and maids, that holy carols sang;
> And well were they whose hands might touch the cords.

The next translator, like Surrey, only lived to accomplish a portion of the 'Æneid;' but it was a much larger portion, and it had the good fortune to be completed by another hand. Thomas Phaer, at one time 'sollicitour to the king and quene's majesties, attending their honourable counsaile in the marchies of Wales,' afterwards 'doctour of physike,' published seven Books of the 'Æneid' in 1558. At his death, two years afterwards, he left a version of the Eighth and Ninth Books, and a part of the Tenth; and in 1573 'the residue' was 'supplied and the whole

worke together newly set forth by Thomas Twyne, gentleman.' This translation is in the long fourteen-syllable or ballad metre, which had then come into vogue, being used even in versions from the drama,[1] and which was afterwards adopted by Chapman in rendering the 'Iliad.' It is of Chapman, indeed, that the ordinary reader will most naturally think in turning over Phaer's pages. Not to dwell on the essential difference between the two involved in the choice of subject, the ballad-measure of Queen Mary's time being as ill suited to the Virgilian hexameter as the ballad-measure of King James's may be well suited to the Homeric, we shall probably be justified in saying that Phaer's inferiority in original power makes him more faithful as a translator, though less interesting as a writer, and that his greater prolixity gives him a certain advantage in dealing with a measure which, from its enormous length, can hardly be made attractive, when written, as Chapman has written it, in couplets closely interlaced and complicated with each other. But Phaer has little or nothing of that 'daring fiery spirit' which, as Pope says, made Chapman write like an immature Homer; and though his language is not without merit, not many expressions can be quoted from him which would appear felicitous to a modern taste. His greatest eulogist is Godwin,[2] who pronounces his book 'the most wonderful depository of living description and fervent feeling that is to be found, perhaps, in all the circle of literature;' and, after quoting various passages with the highest commendation, says that whoever shall read his version of Anchises's speech about Marcellus, at the end of the Sixth

[1] See Warton's account of 'Seneca his tenne Tragedies translated into English,' 1581 (*Hist. of Eng. Poetry*, § lvii.).

[2] *Lives of Edward and John Philips* (London, 1815), pp. 247 foll.

Book, will cease to wonder that the imperial court was dissolved in tears at Virgil's recital. Let us see if we can transcribe it dry-eyed:—

Æneas there (for walke with him he saw a seemly knight,
A goodly springold yong in glistring armour shining bright,
But nothing glad in face, his eyes downcast did shewe no cheere),
O father, what is he that walkes with him as equall peere?
His onely son? or of his stock some child of noble race?
What bustling makes his mates? how great he goth with portly grace?
But cloud of louring night his head full heauy wrappes about.
Then lord Anchises spake, and from his eyes the teares brake out,
O son, thy peoples huge lamented losse seeke not to knowe.
The destnies shall this child onto the world no more but showe,
Nor suffer long to liue: O Gods, though Rome you think to strong
And ouermuch to match, for enuie yet do us no wrong.
What wailings loude of men in stretes, in feeldes, what mourning cries
In mighty campe of Mars, at this mans death in Rome shall rise?
What funeralls, what numbers dead of corpses shalt thou see,
O Tyber flood, whan fleeting nere his new tombe thou shalt flee?
Nor shall there neuer child from Troian line that shal proceede
Exalt his graunsirs hope so hie, nor neuer Rome shal breede
An impe of maruel more, nor more on man may iustly bost.
O vertue, O prescribid faith, O righthand valiaunt most!
Durst no man him haue met in armes conflicting, foteman fearce,
Or wold he fomy horses sides with spurres encountring pearce.
O piteous child, if euer thou thy destnies hard maist breake,
Marcellus thou shalt be. Now reatche me Lillies, Lilly flours,
Giue purple Violetts to me, this neuews soule of ours

With giftes that I may spreade, and though my labour be but vayne,
Yet do my duety deere I shall. Thus did they long complayne.'

The remaining attempts in the sixteenth century deserve registering, chiefly as curious and grotesque experiments. Abraham Fleming, indeed, gave promise of something better in his 'Bucolikes of Publius Virgilius Maro, with alphabeticall Annotations upon proper nams of Gods, Goddesses, men, women, hilles, flouddes, cities, townes, and villages, &c., orderly placed in the margent. Dravvne into plaine and familiar Englishe, verse for verse' (London, 1575), which is in rhymed fourteen-syllable measure in the style of Phaer. But in 1589 he published another version of the 'Eclogues,' along with one of the 'Georgics,' in which he discarded 'foolish rime, the nise observation whereof many times darkeneth, corrupteth, peruerteth, and falsifieth both the sense and the signification,' in favour of unrhymed lines of fourteen or fifteen syllables, not very graceful in themselves, and rendered additionally quaint by a strange fashion of introducing into the middle of the text explanatory notes, which form part and parcel of the metre. Thus he makes Virgil compliment his patron on—

Thy verses, which alone are worthy of
The buskins [brave] of Sophocles [I meane his stately stile],

and mentions, among the prognostics of fair weather—

And Nisus [of Megera king and turned to a falcon]
Capers aloft in skie so cleere, and Scylla [Nisus daughter
Changed into a larke] doth smart for [his faire] purple haire.

The prevalent mania, too, for reviving classical metre, which infected even Sidney and Spenser, took hold, as might be expected, of the would-be translators of Virgil.

Webbe, in his 'Discourse of English Poetrie' (London, 1586), 'blundered,' as he aptly as well as modestly expresses it, upon a hexametrical version of the two first 'Æglogues,' in which Melibœus tells his 'kidlings':—

Neuer again shall I now in a greene bowre sweetlie reposed
See ye in queachie briers farre a loofe clambring on a high hill,
Now shall I sing no Iygges, nor whilst I doo fall to my iunkets,
Shall ye, my Goates, cropping sweete flowers and leaues sit about me.

But the most considerable, and by far the most extraordinary feat of this nature was performed by Richard Stanyhurst, in his 'First Foure Bookes of Virgil's Æneis translated into English Heroical Verse, with other Poëticll devises thereto annexed' (London, 1583). His remarks on his own translation are a curiosity in themselves, and may remind us of Chapman's 'Mysteries revealed in Homer.' 'Virgil,' he says, 'in diuerse places inuesteth Iuno with this epitheton, Saturnia. M. Phaer ouerpasseth it, as if it were an idle word shuffled in by the authour to damme vp the chappes of yawning verses. I never to my remembrance omitted it, as indeed a terme that carieth meate in his mouth, and so emphaticall, as that the ouerslipping of it were in effect the choaking of the Poets discourse, in such hauking wise as if he were throtled with the chincoughe. And to inculcate that clause the better, where the mariage is made in the fourth boke betwene Dido and Aeneas, I adde in my verse Watry Iuno. Although mine Author vsed not the epitheton, Watrye, but onlye made mention of earth, ayer, and fier, yet I am well assured that word throughly conceiued of an hedeful student may giue him such light as may ease him of six moneths trauaile: whyche were well spent, if that Wedlocke were wel understoode.' His practice was not

less remarkable than his theory. Phaer had talked of 'Sir Gyas' and 'Sir Cloanthus,' made Isis masquerade as 'Dame Rainbowe,' and turned 'Gallum rebellem' into 'rebell French.' Stanyhurst (we take the instances given by Warton) calls Corœbus a 'bedlamite;' arms Priam with his sword 'Morglay,' a blade that figures in Gothic romance; makes Dido's 'parvulus Æneas' into 'a cockney, a dandiprat hop-thumb,' and says that when Jupiter 'oscula libavit natæ' he 'bust his pretty prating parrot.' But he shall exhibit himself more at length, and somewhat more favourably, in a passage from the end of the First Æneid (v. 736, 'Dixit, et in mensam,' &c.):—

Thus sayd, with sipping in vessel nicely she dipped.
Shee chargeth Bicias: at a blow hee lustily swapping
Thee wine fresh spuming with a draught swild up to the bottom.
Thee remnaunt lordings him pledge: Then curled Iöppas
Twang'd on his harp golden what he whillon learned of Atlas.
How the moone is trauers'd, how planet soonnie reuolueth,
He chaunts: how mankind, how beasts dooe carrie their offspring:
How flouds be engendered, so how fire, celestial Arcture,
Thee raine breede sev'n stars, with both the Trionical orders:
Why the sun at westward so timely in winter is housed,
And why the night seasons in summer swiftly be posting.
The Moores hands clapping, thee Troians plaudite flapped.

In passing to the seventeenth century we feel that a change has already set in. The metres adopted are such as commend themselves to modern ears; the language, though varying according to the greater or less skill of the individual writer, is not in general marked by much quaintness or redundancy. Let us take a specimen from the earliest version with which we are acquainted[1]—

[1] When we wrote the above, we had not met with a translation of the Second Æneid published in 1620 by Sir Thomas Wroth, under the title of

'Dido's Death: Translated out of the best of Latine Poets into the best of vulgar Languages. By one that hath no name' (London, 1622). 'Præterea fuit in tectis,' &c. (Book iv., v. 457):—

> In her house of stone
> A temple too she had, of former spouse,
> By her much Reuerenc't, with holy bowes
> And Snowwhite Wooll adorn'd, whence oft she hears
> A voice that like her husbands call appeares,
> When darke night holds the world. The ellenge Owle
> Oft on her housetop dismall tunes did houle,
> Lamenting wofull notes at length outdrawing:
> And many former Fortune-tellers' awing
> Forewarnings fright: AEneas too in Dreames
> Makes her runne mad: left by her selfe, she seemes
> Alone some vncouth foule long way to haue taken,
> Tyrians to seeke in desert Land forsaken.

The vogue which these translations obtained does not seem always to have been proportioned to their merits. In 1628 were published 'Virgil's Georgicks Englished by Thomas May, Esq^r.,' and 'Virgil's Eclogves translated into English by W. L.' (William Lisle). The former, if little read, has been not unfrequently mentioned since; the very existence of the latter has been forgotten.[1] Yet

The Destruction of Troy, or the Acts of Aeneas, a copy of which is in the British Museum. Our space will only allow us to say that the metre is Phaer's, but the style more modern.

[1] An account of Lisle, who was an Anglo-Saxon scholar and antiquary, is given in Chalmers's *Biographical Dictionary*; but nothing is said of this translation. He appears, however, to have dedicated an edition of a treatise by Ælfric to Prince Charles in a copy of verses 'by way of Eclogue, imitating the 4th of Virgile,' besides being the author of a version from Du Bartas, and of *The Fair Ethiopian*, which Chalmers calls a long poem of very indifferent merit.

Benson, whom we shall have occasion to mention below, says that almost 100 of May's lines are adopted by Dryden with very little alteration. The first two lines of May seem to have been copied by Ogilby.

> What makes rich crops, what season most inclines
> To plowing th' earth, and marrying elms with vines.—*May.*

our readers, if we mistake not, will peruse the following extract from May's heroics with comparative indifference, while they will thank us for selecting two of Lisle's stanzas. ('Felix qui potuit,' &c., 'Georg.' ii. 490):—

> Happy is he that knowes the cause of things,
> That all his feares to due subjection brings,
> Yea, fate itselfe, and greedy Acheron!
> Yea, happy sure is he, who ere has knowen
> The rurall Gods, Sylvanus, and great Pan,
> And all the sister Nymphs! that happy man
> Nor peoples voices, nor kings purple moue,
> Nor dire ambition sundring brothers loue,
> Nor th' Istrian Dacians fierce conspiracies,
> Nor Romes estate, nor falling monarchies.

'Quem fugis, ah demens,' &c. ('Ecl.' ii. 60) :—

> (Ah foolish Fon) whom dost thou seek to shun?
> Why, Dardan Paris (that same shepheard knight).
> Yea, e'ne the gods themselves, the woods did woon:
> Let Pallas praise her Towres goodly hight,
> And in her pompous Palaces delight
> Which shee hath builded: but of all the rest,
> In my conceit, the Forrest-Life is best.
> The crewell grim-faced Lionesse pursues
> The bloody Woolfe: the Woolfe the kid so free
> The wanton capring kidd doth chiefly chuse
> Amongst the flowring Cythisus to bee:
> And Corydon (Alexis) followes thee:
> So each thing as it likes: and all affect
> According as their nature doth direct.

We must confess, however, that Lisle's 'Eclogues,' which are in a variety of metres, contain other passages less

> What makes Rich Grounds, in what Cælestial Signs
> 'Tis good to Plow, and marry Elms with Vines.—*Ogilby.*

Dryden borrows also once at least from Lisle. But of his plagiarisms more below.

attractive than this. Nor should it be forgotten that much of the charm of these stanzas consists in their reminding us of strains which, when Lisle wrote, already belonged to the past—the pastoral poetry of Spenser. May's notes are less sweet, but they are probably more his own; they reach forward, not backward; they contain not an echo of Spenser, but a propheoy of Dryden.

The year 1632 saw a complete version of the 'Æneid' by Vicars,[1] and a translation of the First Book by Sandys. Vicars, a Parliamentary fanatic, is known to the world as a poet only by the savage lines in 'Hudibras,' where he is coupled with Withers and Prynne as 'inspired with ale and viler liquors to write in spite of nature and his stars.' Sandys is celebrated as the author of the translation of Ovid which Pope read as a child and (not an invariable consequence with him) praised as a man. There seems to be no merit in Vicars. Sandys is perhaps superior to May, but, like him, he pleases chiefly as the harbinger of better things in language and versification. Here is a favourable specimen ('Est in secessu,' &c., 'Æn.' i. 159):—

> Deepe in a Bay an Ile with strecht-out sides
> A harbor makes, and breakes the justling tides:
> The parting floods into a landlockt sound
> Their streams discharge, with rocks invirond round,
> Whereof two, equal lofty, threat the skies,
> Under whose lee the safe Sea silent lies:
> Their browes with dark and trembling woods arayd,
> Whose spreading branches cast a dreadfull shade.

Sir John Denham's translation of the Second Æneid is said to have been made in 1636. We know not whether

[1] The title of Vicars's work is *The XII Aeneids of Virgil, the most renowned Laureat-Prince of Latine Poets, translated into English decasyllables, by Iohn Vicars.* Sandys's is added to an edition of his translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1632), and entitled, *An Essay to the Translation of Virgil's Æneis.*

his 'Passion of Dido for Æneas' was written at the same time, but it seems rather the better of the two. In both, however, Denham is very unequal; a series of vigorous couplets will be followed by passages written in 'concatenated metre,' as Johnson calls it, and disfigured by bad or feeble rhymes. He is fond, too, of engrafting comments and conceits upon his original, as when Dido tells Æneas—

> Thou shouldst mistrust a wind
> False as thy Vows, and as thy heart unkind.

The Queen's dying speech is a fair example of his better manner ('Dulces exuviæ,' &c., 'Æn.' iv. 651):—

> Dear Reliques whilst that Gods and Fates gave leave,
> Free me from care, and my glad soul receive:
> That date which fortune gave I now must end
> And to the shades a noble Ghost descend:
> Sichæus blood by his false Brother spilt
> I have reveng'd, and a proud City built:
> Happy alas! too happy I had liv'd,
> Had not the Trojan on my Coast arriv'd:
> But shall I dye without revenge? yet dye,
> Thus, thus with joy to thy Sichæus flye.
> My conscious Foe my Funeral fire shall view
> From Sea, and may that Omen him pursue.

A better translation of this Fourth Book appeared in 1648 by Sir Richard Fanshaw, a friend of Denham's, who does justice to his powers in an excellent copy of verses recommendatory of his version of Pastor Fido. Fanshaw's case is not unlike Lisle's: instead of prosecuting the cultivation of the heroic, he revives that of the Spenserian stanza. The choice was not a happy one under the circumstances: Virgil did not write in periods of nine lines, and Fanshaw, not being a diffuse writer, is led in consequence to run stanza into stanza, so that the versification

does not enable us to follow the sense. Where, however, sense and metre happen to coincide, he may be read with real pleasure, as in the following passage ('Dissimulare etiam sperasti,' &c., 'Æn.' iv. 305):—

> Didst thou hope too by stealth to leave my land,
> And that such treason could be unbetrayed,
> Nor should my love, nor thy late plighted hand,
> Nor Dido, who would die, thy flight have stayed?
> Must too this voyage be in winter made?
> Through storms? O cruel to thyself and me!
> Didst thou not hunt strange lands and sceptres swayed
> By others, if old Troy revived should be,
> Should Troy itself be sought through a tempestuous sea?

We now come to the first translation of the whole of Virgil, 'The Works of Publius Virgilius Maro, Translated by John Ogilby, and Adorn'd with Sculptur,' first published in 1649–50, and afterwards, we believe, three times reprinted. This indefatigable adventurer, who practised successively or simultaneously the callings of dancing-master, original poet, translator from the classics, and literary projector, frequently ruined, but always recovering himself, learnt Latin in middle life, and proceeded to translate Virgil, as he afterwards learnt Greek and translated Homer. In his way he must be pronounced successful; he was ridiculed, but his version continued to be bought till Dryden's came into the market; and the 'Sculpturs' (engravings), which form a prominent feature in this, as in his other books, were considered good enough to be borrowed by his rival, who did not like to go to the expense of new plates. Nay, he seems to have found admirers still later: his work heads the list of the Lady's Library in the 'Spectator,' Dryden's 'Juvenal' coming second; and we happen to know that it not only is included among the books recommended for examina-

tion to the fraternity of labourers whom the Dean of Westminster is marshalling with a view to the production of a new English dictionary, but that a member of the band has undertaken to study it. In its day it was doubtless a useful and—in the absence of anything better suited to the taste of that generation—even a readable book. It is sufficiently close to the words of Virgil—much more so than Dryden. Its margin is furnished with a collection of notes from the old commentators, done in a tolerably business-like style; and though the author shows no trace of poetical feeling, no real appreciation of poetical language, he writes in general fair commonplace prosaic English, while his mastery over the heroic couplet will probably be pronounced creditable by those who, like our readers, have the means of comparing him with his predecessors and contemporaries. Ad aperturam libri, we select the opening of his Sixth Æneid :—

> Weeping he said: at last with Sails a-trip,
> To the Euboick Confines steers his Ship:
> Then sharpflook'd Anchors they cast out before,
> And the tall Navy fring'd the edging Shore.
> To Latian Shores the youthful Trojans leap'd:
> Some seek the hidden Seeds of Fire that slept
> In Veins of Flint; Beasts shadie Holds, the Woods
> Others cut down, and find concealed Floods:
> But those high Tow'rs pious Æneas sought,
> Where Phœbus rẽign'd, dread Sybils spacious vault,
> Whom Delius had inspired with future Fates.
> They enter Trivia's Grove, and Golden Gates.
> Dædalus leaving Crete (as Stories say)
> Trusting swift Wings, through skies, no usual way,
> Made to the colder north a desperate Flight,
> And did at last on Chalcis Tow'r alight:
> There he his Wings to thee, O Phœbus, paid,
> And wide Foundations of a Temple laid.

The stately porch Androgeus death adorn'd,
Then the Athenians, punish'd, early mourn'd
For seven slain children: there the Lottery stood:
High Crete against it overlook'd the Flood.

Ogilby's elaborate work may possibly have stood in the way of other attempts on a large scale, but it did not deter 'holiday-authors,' as Dryden calls them, who felt they could do better, from exhibiting specimens of their powers in translating portions of Virgil. The Fourth Book of the 'Æneid' still continued to be popular with this class of writers, three or four of whom attempted it about this time—Edmund Waller and Sidney Godolphin (1658), Sir Robert Howard (1660), and Sir Robert Stapylton. None of them are memorable; but as some slight interest may be felt in comparing them, we give their versions of the end of the book in juxtaposition:—

From heaven then Iris with dewy wings,
On which the Sun a thousand glories flings,
Flies to her head: This to the dark abode
I bear, and free thee from this body's load,
She said: then with her right hand cuts her hair,
And her enlarged breath slides into air.—*Howard.*

So dewy rose-winged Iris,[1] having won
Thousand strange colours from the adverse Sun,
Slides down, stands on her head: I bear this, charged,
Sacred to Dis: be from this flesh enlarged.
Thus says, and cuts her hair: together slides
All heat, and into air her spirit glides.—*Stapylton.*

Godolphin makes such short work of Dido's death, that we are compelled to begin our extract from him some lines earlier:—

Then Juno, looking with a pitying eye
Upon so sad and lasting misery,

[1] 'Dewy rose-winged Iris' also appears in Ogilby, who resembles Stapylton likewise in his version of 'teque isto corpore solvo.'

Since deepest wounds can no free passage give
To self-destroyers who refuse to live,
Sent Iris down to cut the fatal hair;
Which done, her whole life vanished into air.

Waller's work merely embraces about a hundred lines, which were not translated by Godolphin. The following lines will show that it is well for him that his reputation as an English poet does not rest on his translation. 'Tu lacrimis evicta meis' (v. 548).—

Ah sister! vanquished with my passion, thou
Betrayedst me first, dispensing with my vow.
Had I been constant to Sychæus still
And single-lived,[1] I had not known this ill.
Such thoughts torment the Queen's enraged breast,
While the Dardanian does securely rest
In his tall ship, for sudden flight prepared:
To whom once more the son of Jove appeared.

More remarkable than any of these experiments on Dido's story is 'An Essay upon Two of Virgil's Eclogues, and Two Books of his Æneis (if this be not enough) towards the Translation of the whole. By James Harrington, 1658.' The author, Sir James Harrington, better known by his 'Oceana,' is compared to Vicars by Butler, who, disliking his politics, chose to sneer at his poetry; but those who have seen his Essay will feel that the sneer falls pointless. Unequal, and occasionally grotesque, he yet shows undeniable signs of vigour and ability, reminding us of Cowley both in his better and his worse manner. His felicities are not indeed Virgilian, as when he translates 'Oscula libavit natæ'

Jove, with the smiles that clear the weather, dips
His coral in the nectar of her lips,

[1] 'Single-lived' is the spelling of the copy before us (1658); but it may be doubted whether the writer did not intend 'lived' for a verb. In that case the compound adjective would be rather a felicitous blunder.

or speaks of Æneas among the paintings at Carthage as

> wandering through a world the pencil struck
> As out of Chaos with stupendous luck:

but they are felicities nevertheless: nor need we deny him the praise of ingenuity when he tells us that Dido

> brings the Trojan to her court,
> And sends a royal present to the port,
> A hundred ewes and lambs, a hundred sows;
> And Bacchus rides upon a drove of cows.

The first simile in the 'Æneid' is rendered thus:—

> As when some mighty city bursteth out
> Into sedition, the ignoble rout
> Assault the palaces, usurp the street
> With stones, or brands, or anything they meet
> (For Fury's armoury is everywhere):
> But, if a man of gravity appear
> Whose worth they own, whose piety they know,
> Are mute, are planted in the place, and grow
> Unto his lips, that smooth, that melt their souls:
> So hush the waves where Neptune's chariot rolls.

As might be expected, the number of holiday-authors increased formidably after the Restoration—so formidably that it would be impossible within our present limits to give any adequate account of their several performances. Not one of the six volumes of Tonson's 'Miscellany' is without some pieces of Virgilian translation: one of them, the first, contains a complete translation of the 'Eclogues' by various hands; a collection which Dryden enriched by two of his own versions, and from which he afterwards did not disdain to borrow.[1] Of these studies by far the

[1] Dryden's chief plagiarisms are from the version of Eclogue I., 'by John Caryll, Esq^re.,' twenty-four of whose lines he appropriates, with slight changes. But there are cases of obligation in subsequent Eclogues which a future editor of Dryden's Virgil will do well to note.

most noteworthy is 'The Last Eclogue, translated, or rather imitated, in the year 1666, by Sir William Temple, Bart.,' a remarkably flowing and vigorous paraphrase, some lines of which might challenge comparison with Dryden's own. As it appears now to be quite forgotten, we shall not apologise for extracting from it rather copiously:—

One labour more, O Arethusa, yield,
Before I leave the shepherds and the field:
Some verses to my Gallus ere we part,
Such as may one day break Lycoris' heart,
As she did his. Who can refuse a song
To one that loved so well, and died so young?
Begin, and sing Gallus' unhappy fires,
While yonder goat to yonder branch aspires
Out of his reach. We sing not to the deaf:
An answer comes from every trembling leaf.

. . . . . .

Under a lonely tree he lay and pined,
His flock about him feeding on the wind,
As he on love: such kind and gentle sheep
E'en fair Adonis would be proud to keep.

. . . . . .

What shakes the branches? what makes all the trees
Begin to bow their heads, the goats their knees?
Oh! 'tis Silvanus, with his mossy beard
And leafy crown, attended by a herd
Of wood-born satyrs: see! he shakes his spear,
A green young oak, the tallest of the year.

. . . . . .

Would it had pleased the Gods I had been born
Just one of you, and taught to wind a horn,
Or wield a hook, or prune a branching vine,
And known no other love but, Phyllis, thine,
Or thine, Amyntas: what though both are brown?
So are the nuts and berries on the down;
Amongst the vines, the willows, and the springs
Phyllis makes garlands, and Amyntas sings.

No cruel absence calls my love away
Further than bleating sheep can go astray:
Here, my Lycoris, here are shady groves,
Here fountains cool and meadows soft: our loves
And lives may here together wear and end:
O, the true joys of such a fate and friend!

Meantime, while veteran diplomatists, rising peers, and future secretaries of state were employing themselves with these occasional performances, the whole of Virgil was being undertaken by a patrician author, Richard Maitland, Earl of Lauderdale. Unfortunately for his reputation, his lordship appears to have hesitated about publishing, and, while he hesitated, the time went by. The version of the First Georgic appeared in the third volume of the 'Miscellany,' in 1694: the 'Æneid' was communicated to Dryden before he had embarked in his own great undertaking, and suffered to remain in his hands afterwards. At length it was resolved that it should be given to the world, but the design was prevented by the author's death. Two years later Dryden took his place as the translator of Virgil, and the chance was gone for even a temporary occupation of the throne. When the great poet, in the preface to his 'Æneid,' complimented his noble friend's work, acknowledging some of his obligations to it, and concealing others, he spoke as if he did not expect that it would ever see the light. Eventually, however, the entire translation found an editor, who supposed, or affected to suppose, that if it could no longer reign alone, the crown might at any rate be divided. 'They who do not place my Lord Lauderdale upon the same foot with Mr. Dryden,' says this friendly critic, 'must be equally injurious to the one's judgment and to the other's translation; for t' will be easy to find upon the parallel that the poetry of South and North Britain is no more incompatible than the constitu-

tion.' But the union did not extend to translations of Virgil. The North British version seems to have attracted no attention: Trapp praises it, and Martyn and Davidson quote it; but it probably was never read. Anyone who will now take the trouble to look at it will see that it is not without merit. But though the noble translator was a better versifier and a greater master of English than Ogilby, he had studied in a school which is on the whole less favourable to a writer of limited powers: instead of copying his original closely, he sometimes transforms and adds to it; and his transformations and additions are hardly, in Denham's language, true to Virgil's fame. The following is an extract from the version of the 'Georgics,' which is more flowing than that of the 'Æneid' ('Nocte leves melius stipulæ,' &c. 'Georg.' i. 289):—

> Parched meadows and dry stubble mow by night:
> Then moisture reigns, which flies Apollo's light.
> Some watch, and torches sharp with cleaving knives
> Till late by winter fires: their careful wives,
> To ease their labour, glad the homely rooms
> With cheerful notes, while weaving on their looms,
> Or else in kettles boil new wine, and skim
> The dregs with leaves, when they o'erflow the brim.
> But reap your yellow grain with glowing heat,
> And on your floor with scorching Phœbus beat.
> When days are clear, then naked till and sow:
> In lazy winter labourers lazy grow:
> For that's a jovial time, when jovial swains
> Meet, and in feasting waste their summer gains,
> As seamen, come to port from stormy seas,
> First crown their vessels, then indulge their ease.

In 1696, as we have already intimated, Dryden's translation was published. Of its surpassing merits we must defer speaking till we have finished our chronological enumeration, as they are not of a nature which will bear

dismissing in a few sentences. Standing as it does nearly midway in the history of Virgilian translations, it throws into the shade not only all that preceded, but all that have followed it. If Dryden's successors are less incapable of being put into comparison with him than his predecessors, it is to Dryden himself that the advantage, such as it is, is in some measure due.

Dryden's successors did not, in the first instance, attempt to meet him on his own ground. He had himself expressed an opinion, whether deliberately formed or not, in favour of translations into blank verse; and translations into blank verse soon became as popular among writers, if not among readers, of poetry as translations into rhyme. The illustrious examples of Shakspeare and Milton, long slighted, had at last done their work, the one restoring blank verse in tragedy, the other reinstating it in epic poetry: the new measure was doubtless felt to be easier than the old; and criticism was beginning to find out that a translation which should represent the words as well as the general meaning of an author could hardly be executed in such rhyme as the literary public of the eighteenth century would care to read. Accordingly, when Dr. Brady, Nahum Tate's coadjutor in the New Version of the Psalms, turned to translating the 'Æneid' (1716–1726), he translated it into blank verse. His attempt is characterised contemptuously enough by Johnson, whose opinion we do not feel inclined to dispute. The next blank verse experiment is better known to ourselves, and probably to our readers also. In the last volume of Tonson's 'Miscellany,' Trapp appeared as a translator of the Tenth Eclogue into rhyme, and of the end of the First Georgic into blank verse: he was afterwards to execute a blank version of the whole of Virgil's three poems, publishing the 'Æneid' in 1717 or 1718, the 'Bucolics' and 'Georgics' about 1731.

We may perhaps speak of his work more in detail hereafter; for the present it is sufficient to say, that whether owing to the University reputation of the author, who was the first Oxford Professor of Poetry, or to the more substantial recommendations of a version which, as Johnson says, might serve as the clandestine refuge of schoolboys, and of a commentary containing a good deal of information and not a little prosaic good sense, the book reached the honours of a third edition in 1735.

In 1764 Trapp's example was followed by another ex-Professor of Poetry, Hawkins by name. If we are unable to give any account of his version of the 'Æneid,' we may plead as our excuse that it is not to be found in the library of the University of which the translator was a professor, nor in that of the college (Pembroke) of which he was a Fellow, nor again in that of the British Museum. By way of amends, however, we can tell our readers something of the translation which appeared next in order of time, 'The Works of Virgil Englished by Robert Andrews, 1766.' The author, who was fortunate enough to secure Baskerville for his printer, and thus to make his work externally, at any rate, a most attractive one, imputes the shortcomings of former translators to their adoption of rhyme. 'The best of 'em had not doft their Gothic shackles when they dared to the race the most rapid of the poets: how then should they save their distance?' Here is this unshackled runner's own start:—

M. You, Tityro, lolling 'neath the spreading beech,
Muse on your slender straw the sylvan song.
We leave our country, our sweet meadows quit,
Our country fly. You, Tityro, soft imbowered,
Prompt fair Amarilla to the echoing woods.
T. A God, Melibœe! gave us these calm hours.

This singular fashion of manipulating proper names runs

through the book, and is indeed one of its chief characteristics. Thus we have Daphny, Alexy, Mopsy, Philly, Lycid (a name which may perhaps show that Mr. Andrews conceived himself only to be taking a Miltonic liberty), Thyrse, Menalca, Paleme, Cloanth, Helnor and Lyke (for Helenor and Lycus), Mezente, and Jutna (for Juturna).

In 1767 was published 'The Æneid of Virgil, translated into Blank Verse by Alexander Strahan, Esq.,' who had already twice before attempted portions of the poem. He professes to have 'kept as close to his author as the late Dr. Trapp in respect of his sense, but to have taken a little more compass for the sake of harmony.' The experiment issues in lines like these ('Quæ te tam læta tulerunt,' 'Æn.' i. 605):—

> What happy ages gave you to the world?
> What parents such perfection could produce?
> While to their mother sea the rivers flow,
> While mountains cast their spreading shadows round,
> While Æther feeds the stars, your sacred name,
> Your bright idea shall for ever last,
> Where'er my fate may bear me o'er the globe.

The Tenth and Twelfth Books were contributed by Dobson, the same who gave a Latin dress to the 'Paradise Lost.'

More than thirty years remained to the end of the century; but it was not till 1794 that another blank verse translator of Virgil showed himself. This was the Rev. James Beresford, Fellow of Merton College, otherwise known as the author of a popular *jeu d'esprit* called the 'Miseries of Human Life,' and of a less successful polemic against Calvinism. Cowper's 'Homer' had recently appeared, and had been recognised to be, what it certainly is, a work of real merit; and it was tempting to try whether the same process could not after all be made to

answer with Virgil. But Cowper's success, whatever it may have been, was due, not to the theories of his preface, but to his practice as an original poet: it established a case for blank verse as wielded by Cowper, not as wielded by Mr. Beresford. As usual, we give a specimen of his translation ('Tempus erat, quo prima,' 'Æn.' ii. 268):—

'Twas at the hour when first oblivious rest
To care-sick mortals comes, and, gift of gods,
Of all their gifts best welcome, steals unfelt,
When, as I slept, before my eyes, behold,
Hector, all woe-begone, appeared to come
In present sight, and pour down copious tears,
As dragged erewhile fast by the chariot wheels
Sordid with bloody dust, his big-swoln feet
With thongs transpierced. Ah me! what seemed he then!
How from that Hector changed, who late returned
Clad in the glorious spoils of Peleus' son,
Or fresh from hurling on the barks of Greece
His Phrygian fires! Now—squalid was his beard,
His locks blood-knotted, and those gashes too
Were seen, which round his parent country's walls,
In fights of yore, he, numberless, had borne.
Melting in tears, I seemed to accost the shade
Spontaneous, and these mournful words draw forth.

Dr. Symmons—who speaks of blank verse rather happily,[1] as 'only a laborious and doubtful struggle to escape from the fangs of prose,' adding that, 'if it ever ventures to relax into simple and natural phraseology, it instantly becomes tame, and the prey of its pursuer'—has passed a censure which, inapplicable to Cowper, for whom it was intended, is not more than a just description of what has been accomplished by Cowper's Virgilian follower.

The rhyming translators of Virgil during the eighteenth

[1] Preface to *Æneid*, p. 22 (2nd edition).

century were fewer, but they were men of more mark. Some portion of their success is doubtless due to the vehicle which they chose. The heroic couplet, as managed by Dryden, is far more open to imitation than the blank verse of the 'Paradise Lost;' the sources of the pleasure which it creates lie nearer to the surface, and are more accessible to an ordinary writer. And if Dryden is more imitable than Milton, Pope is more imitable than Dryden. Dryden was essentially capricious: sometimes vigorous and splendid, at others flat and slovenly. He was a critic, but his canons of criticism are constantly varying, and the astonishing effects which he at times produces are due to ear and natural instinct rather than to deliberate judgment. With Pope, on the other hand, all was conscious art; he took his measure, such as it was, of the capabilities of the heroic couplet, and with steady and unwearied patience set himself to realise them in his practice; and his successors, after admiring the marvellous result, might reasonably hope, by the exertion of moderate powers of analysis, to attain to some notion of the process. In or before 1724, after the completion of the English 'Iliad,' Benson, celebrated by Pope as the admirer of Milton and Johnston's Psalms, being dissatisfied with the way in which Dryden had dealt with the poetry and the agriculture of Virgil, published 'Virgil's Husbandry; or an Essay on the Georgics;' a version of the Second Book, with explanatory notes, following it up next year with a similar 'Essay' on the First. The subjoined extract, if it has no other interest, will show, at any rate, that Pope's influence was already beginning to tell ('Nec requies quin aut pomis,' 'Georg.' ii. 516):—

> Nor rests the year, but still with fruit abounds
> Or vast increase of herds, or loads the grounds

With piles unnumbered of promiscuous grain,
Subdues the barns, and triumphs on the plain.
A storm descends: Sicyonian berries feel
The nimble poundings of the clattering steel:
The falling acorns rustle in the wood,
And swine run homeward cheerful with their food:
The copse her wildings gives from shattered bowers,
And teeming autumn lays down all her stores,
Whilst high on sunny rocks the clustered vine
Boils into juice and reddens into wine.

A much more memorable attempt to beat Dryden with Pope's weapons was made by Pitt, who, after dallying for some time with a new version of the 'Æneid,' completed it at last, and published it in 1740. Pitt was intimate with Spence, the friend of Pope; and the great poet, in words which seem not to have been preserved, signified his approval of an experiment which but for him would scarcely have been possible. After the author's death, Joseph Warton, a brother Wykehamist, completed the translation by the addition of the 'Eclogues' and 'Georgics,' and republished it with a dedication to the first Lord Lyttelton, in which he finds fault with Dryden, and asserts Pitt's superiority: a judgment, the merits of which, as well as those of Warton's own translation, we hope shortly to consider. Sotheby's version of the 'Georgics,' the first edition of which (1800) is just included in the eighteenth century, will come in for its share of notice most appropriately at the same time. All three were conspicuously inferior to Dryden, but they were in some sense foemen worthy of his steel, and it is well that they should have an opportunity of exhibiting themselves along with him. We have been in some doubt whether to reserve our judgment of Beattie's 'Eclogues;' but a comparison of his translation with Dryden's and Warton's, by a favourable though not undiscriminating judge, is included in his

Life by Sir William Forbes, and may be consulted there. The translation seems not to have been greatly valued by the author, who apparently did not reprint it, nor is it to be found in all collections of his poems. In his original compositions Beattie is pleasing rather than vigorous, and this is very much the character, both positively and negatively, of his translation, which is freely executed, and contains at least as much of the author as of his Latin model. The following lines will exhibit at once his better and his worse qualities ('Muscosi fontes,' &c. 'Ecl.' vii. 45):—

Corydon. Ye mossy fountains, warbling as ye flow,
And, softer than the slumbers ye bestow,
Ye grassy banks! ye trees with verdure crowned,
Whose leaves a glimmering shade diffuse around!
Grant to my weary flocks a cool retreat,
And screen them from the summer's raging heat!
For now the year in brightest glory shines,
Now reddening clusters deck the bending vines.

Thyrsis. Here 's wood for fuel: here the fire displays
To all around its animating blaze;
Black with continual smoke our posts appear,
Nor dread we more the rigour of the year
Than the fell wolf the fearful lambkins dreads
When he the helpless fold by night invades,
Or swelling torrents, headlong as they roll,
The weak resistance of the shattered mole.

The one other translator of the eighteenth century whose work has fallen in our way, is a Mr. John Theobald, whose 'Second Book of Virgil's Æneid, in Four Cantos, with Notes'—a handsome quarto—bears no date, but has the appearance of having been published some time after the middle of the century. His lines are such as Surrey or Phaer would doubtless have envied for their smoothness and finish; but a reader of the present day will hardly

regret that the four cantos were not extended to forty-eight.

The course of Virgilian translation in the nineteenth century is as illustrative of the general literary history of the period as the corresponding phase in the eighteenth. In the first thirty years several translations appeared, marked more or less by the characteristics of the preceding century: since that time, the old notion of translation—that which aims at substituting a pleasing English poem for an admired original—has been well-nigh abandoned, and experiments as multiform as those practised by the Elizabethan scholars and poets have become the order of the day. We are reminded, not of Dryden or Warton, but of Webbe, Fleming, and Stanyhurst. These revolutionary aspects constitute a new division of our subject, and call, in fact, for a separate discussion. Of the translations that remain, by far the most considerable is the 'Æneis' of Dr. Symmons, which appeared in 1816, and was reprinted in 1820. It is worth reserving for further notice, and we reserve it accordingly.

The only other attempt we need mention is the version of the 'Eclogues' made about 1830 by Archdeacon Wrangham, an accomplished scholar and versifier, whose name has not yet died out of remembrance. His lines are elegant, but artificial and involved; they show the man of taste, not the genuine poet or the master of vigorous English. Take the end of the 'Pollio' ('Aggredere, O magnos,' 'Ecl.' iv. 48):—

> These honours thou—'tis now the time—approve,
> Child of the skies, great progeny of Jove!
> Beneath the solid orb's vast convex bent,
> See on the coming year the world intent:
> See earth and sea and highest heaven rejoice:
> All but articulate their grateful voice.

O reach so far my long life's closing strain!
My breath so long to hymn thy deeds remain!
Orpheus nor Linus should my verse excel,
Though even Calliope her Orpheus' shell
Should string, and (anxious for the son the sire)
His Linus' numbers Phœbus should inspire!
Should Pan himself before his Arcady
Contend, he'd own his song surpassed by me.

Know then, dear Boy, thy mother by her smile:
Enough ten months have given of pain and toil.
Know her, dear Boy,—who ne'er such smile has known,
Nor board nor bed divine 'tis his to own.

Thus far we have seen what has been accomplished by the different translators of Virgil, down to a few years from the time at which we are now writing. Their object, in general, has been, as we said just now, to substitute a pleasing English poem for an admired original. This being the case, it was naturally to be expected that the one who happened to be the best English poet should be the best translator. Perhaps it might be necessary to stipulate that there should be some similarity between the genius of the poet translating and that of the poet translated. A 'Virgil' by Shelley would have been un-Virgilian, though scarcely more so than Pope's 'Homer' is un-Homeric; but where any scope is given for the exhibition of native poetical power, a true poet, however careless, is sure to please more than the most fastidiously elegant versifier. And this is just what has happened. Whatever a few critics may have thought and said, Dryden's is the only English 'Virgil' of which the bulk of English readers know anything.

It is doubtless true, as a critical theory, that a translator ought to endeavour not only to say what his author has said, but to say it as he has said it. In the greatest writers, thought and language may possibly be distinguished,

but can scarcely be dissociated. Every true poet has a style of his own: a style which probably forms half of what makes him please, and more than half of that which makes him remembered. And if this be true of other writers, it is especially true of Virgil. He has chosen to trust, as scarcely anyone else has done, to expression—to the preference not merely of one word to another, but of one arrangement of words to another. He insinuates new thoughts through the medium of apparent tautologies; he calls in old phrases, recasts them, and produces new effects. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that few of the translators of Virgil have trusted to themselves so entirely as Dryden. He worked hurriedly and under pressure; he was hardly likely to be more attentive to his author's language than in his original compositions; nay, the very vigour of his genius required that he should abandon himself to his own impulses and express himself in his own way. He was constantly adding to his original, and that in the most wilful and reckless manner. There were elements in his nature peculiarly repugnant to the Virgilian ideal, and those elements he was at no great pains to conceal. When he chose he could be not only careless and slovenly, but offensively coarse and vulgar, and he is so in his 'Virgil' a hundred times. From the very first he made himself fair game for his rivals and critics, and they have taken their full advantage. From Milbourne and Trapp down to the Messrs. Kennedy, every aspiring translator has been able to quote a long list of passages where Dryden has failed grossly, and has argued in consequence that a true translation of Virgil has yet to be made. Yet their case, as we venture to think, easily proved in theory, has uniformly broken down in practice. The fact is, that what they have proved has been proved not merely against Dryden, but against

themselves. The question of fidelity of rendering, in the case of a writer like Virgil, can hardly be made one of degree. It is idle to discuss who has come nearest to the style and language of Virgil, when no one has come within any appreciable distance. A blank versifier may flatter himself that he can do more than a rhymer, but it will probably be because he is less capable of producing something which may be read with pleasure as an original poem. The rhymers, at any rate, are placed *ipso facto* on terms of virtual equality so far as resemblance to Virgil's manner is concerned. They are compelled to sacrifice all that makes that manner what it is, and the one thing that the public has to care for is the goodness or badness of the substitute they offer. Here it is that Dryden's greatness comes out. Compare him with other translators, and it will be seen that while none of them have anything of Virgil's individuality, he alone has an individuality of his own of sufficient mark to interest and impress the reader. Let us make our meaning clear by an instance or two. We will take four lines near the opening of the First Æneid, and see how they have been dealt with by the chief rhyming translators :—

Musa, mihi causas memora, quo numine læso,
Quidve dolens regina Deûm tot volvere casus
Insignem pietate virum, tot adire labores
Impulerit. Tantæne animis cælestibus iræ ?

DRYDEN.

O Muse ! the causes and the crimes relate ;
What goddess was provoked, and whence her hate ;
For what offence the queen of heaven began
To persecute so brave, so just a man,
Involved his anxious life in endless cares,
Exposed to want, and hurried into wars.
Can heavenly minds such high resentment show,
Or exercise their spite in human woe ?

PITT.

Say, Muse, what causes could so far incense
Celestial powers, and what the dire offence
That moved heaven's awful empress to impose
On such a pious prince a weight of woes,
Exposed to dangers, and with toils opprest.
Can rage so fierce inflame a heavenly breast?

SYMMONS.

Speak, Muse! the causes of effects so great:
What god was wronged? or why, incensed with hate,
Should Heaven's high queen with toils on toils confound
The man for piety to heaven renowned,
And urge him with a ceaseless tide of ills?
Ah! can such passions goad celestial wills?

Here, if we make it a question of degrees, there is doubtless much to be urged against Dryden, who has expanded into eight lines what the others have been content to express in six, and a closer pressure, such as Sotheby occasionally practised, might possibly have reduced to four. But if we look closely at the original, we shall see that its peculiar characteristics have really been preserved by none of the three. Which of them gives any conception of the Virgilian rhythm? and yet what would a passage of Virgil be without this? Who has imitated the peculiarity of 'quo numine læso'—that expression which still continues to be the *crux* of commentators? Or, if it be thought too much to expect that a translator should adumbrate what no annotator has succeeded in fixing, what have we in any of the three to represent that most Virgilian of phrases—half-inverted, half-direct —'tot volvere casus'? Dryden has 'involved;' Pitt talks of 'a weight of woes;' Symmons of 'confounding with toils on toils;' but none of these is what Virgil has said, though any of them will serve to express roughly

what he meant. Looking to Virgil's general meaning, we see no reason to doubt that it is fairly conveyed by Dryden's eight lines—eight lines which seem to us the very perfection of clear unaffected musical English. It is needless to compare them in detail with those of Pitt and Symmons; they are obviously such as only a master like Dryden could have written:—

> Hæc miscere nefas: nec cum sis cetera fossor,
> Tres tantum ad numeros Satyrum moveare Bathylli.

The same easy strength is observable throughout Dryden's version of the 'Georgics.' Even where it is evident that he is not putting forth his full power, he will generally be found to distance his competitors. Let us try them in a tolerably simple passage from the Second Book (v. 362):—

> Ac dum prima novis adolescit frondibus ætas,
> Parcendum teneris: et dum se lætus ad auras
> Palmes agit, laxis per purum immissus habenis.
> Ipsa acies nondum falcis tentanda, sed uncis
> Carpendæ manibus frondes interque legendæ.
> Inde ubi jam validis amplexæ stirpibus ulmos
> Exierint, tum stringe comas, tum brachia tonde:
> Ante reformidant ferrum: tum denique dura
> Exerce imperia, et ramos compesce fluentes.

DRYDEN.

> But in their tender nonage, while they spread
> Their springing leaves, and lift their infant head,
> And upward while they shoot in open air,
> Indulge their childhood, and the nursling spare:
> Nor exercise thy rage on new-born life,
> But let thy hand supply the pruning-knife,
> And crop luxuriant stragglers, nor be loth
> To strip the branches of their leafy growth.

But when the rooted vines with steady hold
Can grasp their elms, then, husbandman, be bold
To lop the disobedient boughs, that strayed
Beyond their ranks: let crooked steel invade
The lawless troops which discipline disclaim,
And their superfluous growth with rigour tame.

WARTON.

The new-born buds, the tender foliage spare:
The shoots that vigorous dart into the air,
Disdaining bonds, all free and full of life,
O dare not wound too soon with sharpened knife!
Insert your bending fingers, gently cull
The roving shoots, and reddening branches pull.
But when they clasp their elms with strong embrace,
Lop the luxuriant boughs, a lawless race:
Ere this they dread the steel: now, now reclaim
The flowing branches, the bold wanderers tame.

SOTHEBY.

When the new leaf in Spring's luxuriant time
Clothes the young shoot, oh! spare its tender prime:
And when the gadding tendril wildly gay
Darts into air and wantons on its way,
Indulgent yet the knife's keen edge forbear,
But nip the leaves, and lighten here and there:
But when in lusty strength the o'ershadowing vine
Clings with strong shoots that all the elm entwine,
Range with free steel, exert tyrannic sway,
Lop the rank bough, and curb the exuberant spray.

As usual, Dryden allows himself more license than the rest, and his freedom has led him into a misconception of the meaning of the first sentence, which the other two, owing to their greater fidelity, avoid, or appear to avoid. He confuses the earliest stage, when the leaves are not to be touched at all, with the second, when they are not to be touched by the pruning-hook. But in spite of this,

and in spite of the general latitude of his rendering, we are mistaken if our readers fail to perceive his great superiority. Sotheby keeps much closer to Virgil, but it is a closeness by which we set very little store, failing, as it does, to bring out the chief points of his author's language,—the 'laxis per purum immissus habenis,' and even the 'tum—tum—tum denique.' The military metaphor in Dryden's last lines may seem rather a bold expansion of 'dura exerce imperia;' but it is thoroughly in the spirit of the original. Every line of Virgil shows that he regarded the vine-branch as a living thing; that is the key-note of the paragraph, and no one has seen this so clearly or brought it out so vividly as Dryden.

Our judgment then is, that Pitt and Warton, Symmons and Sotheby, fail as translators precisely because they fail as original poets. They cannot help being more or less original, substituting, that is, their own mode of expression for Virgil's; and their originality is comparatively uninteresting. They are not great poets, but simply accomplished versifiers. Each has his own merits; each shows his weakness in his own way. Pitt wrote with the echoes of Pope in his ears, and may remind his readers of the English 'Homer' as long as they have not the English 'Homer' by them. Those who wish to estimate his real relation to his master may compare a translation of his from the Twenty-third Odyssey, printed in 'Pope's Letters,'[1] with Pope's own. His chief fault is a general mediocrity of expression: a monotonous level, which is neither high poetry nor good prose. Dryden's narrative is easy and straightforward; Pitt's indefinite and conventional. He has, as it were, a certain cycle of rhymes

[1] Pitt to Spence in Pope's Letters (*Works*, by Bowles, vol. viii. p. 352). The Twenty-third Book was translated by Broome, but Pope doubtless altered it.

which Pope has made classical, and he rarely ventures to deviate from it. We open his translation at random, glance down a page, and find the couplets end as follows: *Tyre, fire; round, crowned; joy, Troy; hour, o'er; grace, race; glows, rows; delay, way; designed, mind; come, room; inspire, fire; place, race; rest, addrest; above, Jove; implore, adore; tost, coast; know, woe. Ex pede Herculem*, when we see *tost* and *coast*, *inspire* and *fire*, in a writer of the school of Pope, we know pretty well what the rest of the line is likely to have been. One of Pitt's most enthusiastic admirers observes, not without truth, that he is peculiarly unfortunate in his versions of similes. A simile is one of those things in which weakness of handling is most likely to come out; as managed by Virgil it is commonly a description in itself, and the features in it which are not intended to be made prominent will often escape an inattentive reader. Warton was heavier and more prosaic than Pitt, without being much less conventional. His ear was worse, his command of poetical language more restricted; yet he sighs, in his dedication, over the necessity of using 'coarse and common words' in his translation of the 'Georgics,' viz. *plough* and *sow*, *wheat*, *dung*, *ashes*, *horse*, and *cow*, &c.; words which he fears 'will unconquerably disgust many a delicate reader.' When Virgil rises, Warton does not rise with him; his version of the 'Pollio' and of the Praises of Italy may be read without kindling any spark of enthusiasm. Who, with genuine poetry in his soul, could have thus rendered 'Salve, magna parens frugum,' &c. ('Georg.' ii. 173)?—

> All hail, Saturnian soil! immortal source
> Of mighty men and plenty's richest stores!
> For thee my lays inquisitive impart
> This useful argument of ancient art:

For thee I dare unlock the sacred spring,
And through thy streets Ascræan numbers sing.

Sotheby and Symmons may be contrasted as well as paralleled with Warton and Pitt. When they wrote, the language of English classical poetry had become still more artificial, the structure of the heroic couplet still more conventional. Sotheby's 'Georgics' run, in fact, to the tune of the 'Pleasures of Hope.' It would be too much to ascribe any very direct influence to a poem published only a year previously. Still the secret of their weakness could hardly be better described than in the words which Hazlitt applies to Campbell's poem. 'A painful attention is paid to the expression in proportion as there is little to express, and the decomposition of prose is substituted for the composition of poetry.'[1] There are many well-wrought lines; sometimes we may find a whole passage which has been successfully laboured; but we miss throughout that pervading vigour which works from within, not from without—which expresses itself poetically, because it has first learned to express itself in English. Nowhere is the power of writing English more needed than in translating the 'Georgics.' Even as it is, Virgil's didactics are well nigh crushed under a load of ornament: there is everything to tempt a translator not to say a plain thing in a plain way; and the slightest additional bias in favour of the indirect chicaneries of language is sure to be fatal. Here are Sotheby's directions for the construction of bee-hives ('Ipsa autem, seu corticibus tibi suta cavatis,' &c. 'Georg.' iv. 33):—

Alike, if hollow cork their fabric form,
Or flexile twigs enclose the settled swarm,

[1] *Lectures on the English Poets*, p. 294 (1st edition). Hazlitt censures Rogers—who, as he truly says, is a poet of the same school—in language still more severe, but, with all its exaggeration, not wholly undeserved.

With narrow entrance guard, lest frosts congeal,
Or summer suns the melting cells unseal.
Hence not in vain the bees their domes prepare,
And smear the chinks that open to the air,
With flowers and fucus close each pervious pore,
With wax cement, and thicken o'er and o'er.
Stored for this use they hive the clammy dew,
And load their garners with tenacious glue,
As birdlime thick, or pitch, that slow distils
In unctuous drops on Ida's pine-crowned hills.
And oft, 'tis said, they delve beneath the earth,
Hide in worn stones and hollow trees their birth:
Aid thou their toil: with mud their walls o'erlay,
And lightly shade the roof with leafy spray.

Every line here gives evidence of taste and refinement: some of them show considerable power of condensed expression, yet who would care to read page after page of poetry of this sort, apart from the associations of the Latin? 'Decipit exemplar vitiis imitabile.' Sotheby knew and felt that one of Virgil's greatest charms was his diction; he was doubtless conscious that his own strength lay in elegance of expression; and he may not unreasonably have been led to believe that he was well qualified to succeed in a translation of the 'Georgics.' But though his 'Virgil,' the task of his youth, is very superior to his 'Homer,' the labour of his old age, not only from the greater congeniality of the subject, but in itself, as an original poem, few, we apprehend, would be found now to endorse the opinion expressed by several of his contemporaries, that he has contrived to occupy a place which the carelessness and slovenliness of Dryden had left vacant. One cause of the want of interest with which we read his 'Georgics' may be the wearying monotony of their versification. The heroic couplet is there as it passed from Pope to Darwin, and from Darwin to Camp-

bell; but an unbroken series of such couplets is a poor substitute for the interwoven harmonies of Virgil. When a strong or even a rough line is wanted, Sotheby has no objection to introducing it, any more than Pope had before him; but to fuse couplet into couplet, varying the cadences till the entire paragraph becomes a complex rhythmical whole, was a gift which nature denied him, and art did not supply.

Symmons is, as we have intimated, a writer of the same school as Sotheby, preferable in some respects, inferior in others. Probably he has not as many good lines, but he produces less the effect of sameness: he is not so conventional, but he is more of a pedant. On the whole, however, the family likeness between them is considerable, as will be seen from the following extract from the boat-race in the Fifth Æneid ('Quo diversus abis,' &c. v. 166):—

Why thus, Menœtes, still licentious stray?
Keep to the rock! be frugal of the way!
Gyas again exclaims: and close behind
Beholds Cloanthus to the rock inclined.
He 'twixt the ship of Gyas and the steep
Steers with nice judgment, and attains the deep:
Then, as he there in fearless triumph rides,
From the late victor and the goal he glides.
But rage and anguish swell in Gyas' breast,
Nor stands within his eye the tear repressed.
His rank forgetting, and the care he owes
To his ship's safety, from the stern he throws
The tardy master headlong on the tide,
And his own hands the vacant steerage guide.
Become the pilot and the captain too,
Landward he turns the helm and cheers his crew.
But, scarcely rising from the deep at length,
With his drenched clothes and age-diminished strength,
Menœtes to the rock with labour swims,
And on its sunny forehead dries his limbs.

Him in his plunge, and in his dripping plight,
The Trojans view, diverted at the sight,
And, as the briny draught his breast restores,
Loud peals of laughter rattle through the shores.

This is carefully done, and undoubtedly keeps closer to the Latin than Dryden's version; but it is not the narrative of Virgil; nor was it likely to make the readers of 1816 forget the 'Corsair' and 'Lara.'

The moral which we would draw from this part of our criticism is, that no one is likely to attain as a poetical translator the excellence which would be denied to him as an original writer. In prose the case is different, as there the translator has to draw far less on his own powers; though even there it will be true that a man who is best able to express his own thoughts will be best able—we do not say most willing—to express the thoughts of another. But the poetical translator is really an original poet; and the stream cannot rise higher than its source.

One great poet there has been who once conceived the thought of disputing Dryden's supremacy as a translator of the 'Æneid.' Wordsworth saw, as many others have seen, that Dryden's genius did not correspond to Virgil's—that there is no analogy between the Latin and the English 'Æneid,' the peculiar charm of the one being different from the peculiar charm of the other; and he thought that, by submitting to a more exacting self-criticism than Dryden's, he might produce something more Virgilian. But he found himself surrounded with difficulties. In his own mind he was convinced that the proper equivalent to the hexameter of Virgil was the blank verse of Milton, which he conceived to have been actually modelled upon it; but he did not venture to adopt it, feeling that a poem so remote in its whole complexion from the sympathies of modern

England would not be read with interest without the obvious attractions of rhyme. He found, too, that in spite of the resolution with which he had set out, not to introduce anything for which there was no warrant in the original, he had to admit the rule of compensation—a give and take principle, conferring on Virgil some new beauty in return for having deprived him of an old one. His sense of the discouraging nature of his task at last made him give it up, but not before he had accomplished several books. One or two passages from his translation are given in letters quoted in his Life, the source to which we are indebted for the facts we have just mentioned; but by far the most satisfactory specimen is a long extract of one hundred lines, published in the 'Philological Museum' (vol. i. pp. 382 fol.), to which he was induced to communicate it by his friendship to the editor, the late Archdeacon Hare. Judging from this sample, we incline to think that he acted wisely in retiring from the contest. He may have had a more delicate sense of language, and perhaps a subtler feeling for metre, than Dryden, but his own poetical art was scarcely equal to his power of conception; and the philosophical and reflective character of his genius, which could not but be impressed on everything he wrote, was quite unlike the reflectiveness of Virgil. In particular, he wanted that rapidity of movement which is absolutely necessary to an epic narrative, and which Dryden possessed to a degree greater perhaps than any other English poet. We give one passage—the one where it appears to us Wordsworth has succeeded best in representing what, as he justly observes, Dryden habitually neglects, the peculiar rhythm of his original: and we subjoin to it Dryden's lines, that the two may be compared as pieces of independent poetry ('Præcipue infelix,' 'Æn.' i. 712):—

WORDSWORTH.

But chiefly Dido, to the coming ill
Devoted, strives in vain her vast desires to fill;
She views the gifts: upon the child then turns
Insatiable looks, and gazing burns.
To ease a father's cheated love he hung
Upon Æneas, and around him clung:
Then seeks the queen: with her his arts he tries:
She fastens on the boy enamoured eyes,
Clasps in her arms, nor weens (O lot unblest!)
How great a god, incumbent o'er her breast,
Would fill it with his spirit. He, to please
His Acidalian mother, by degrees
Blots out Sichæus, studious to remove
The dead by influx of a living love,
By stealthy entrance of a perilous guest
Troubling a heart that had been long at rest.

DRYDEN.

But, far above the rest, the royal dame,
Already doomed to love's disastrous flame,
With eyes insatiate and tumultuous joy
Beholds the present, and admires the boy.
The guileful god about the hero long
With children's play and false embraces hung:
Then sought the queen: she took him to her arms
With greedy pleasure, and devoured his charms.
Unhappy Dido little thought what guest,
How dire a god, she drew so near her breast.
But he, not mindless of his mother's prayer,
Works in the pliant bosom of the fair,
And moulds her heart anew, and blots her former care:
The dead is to the living love resigned,
And all Æneas enters in her mind.

Dryden is here not at his strongest; while Wordsworth, as we think, has succeeded better than in any other part of the specimen. Yet we should not wonder if the English

reader should like Dryden best. He has fewer delicate touches, and generally preserves less of Virgil's manner; but he is as usual easy, vigorous, and masterly: his language is what Wordsworth wished the language of poetry to be, the language of good prose, *mutatis mutandis*; and the measure, if not Virgilian, has at any rate the same effect as Virgil's, carrying the reader along without anything to interrupt the sense of intellectual satisfaction.

Here accordingly we leave the question of the translation of Virgil into verse, its practice and its theory. England, we think, is to be congratulated on the possession of one really fine poem, not more unlike Virgil than its rivals in external feature, while possessing to an infinitely greater degree than any of them that 'energy divine' which constitutes the essence of all poetry, ancient or modern. That a better version—one more Virgilian, and not less attractive—might not conceivably be produced, we do not say. Mr. Tennyson is yet among us, and we would not presume to limit the capabilities of so great a master of language and metre. But the change which has taken place in literary taste forbids us to think it likely that any great poet will ever make the attempt. The work of translation was found irksome even by Pope; it would be doubly irksome now, when imitative classical poetry has ceased to be the order of the day; and the advance in critical perception, which has raised infinitely the ideal of what a translation should be, in perfecting the theory has removed the practice to an indefinite distance. In the meantime we may congratulate ourselves on the possession of a splendid English epic, in which most of the thoughts are Virgil's, and most of the language Dryden's.

But a further inquiry remains behind. If in one sense the demand for translations of the classics has greatly diminished, in another it has increased. The success of

Mr. Bohn's Classical Library—success attained against considerable disadvantages, the authors in many cases being far from popular, while the translators are not always absolutely competent—is a proof that a considerable portion of the reading public, for different reasons, desires to have the classics made accessible in English. Schoolboys are as fond of 'clandestine refuges' now as they were in Trapp's days: schoolmasters are, we fancy, beginning to tolerate, under certain modifications, what they cannot exterminate, while they see that among their elder pupils at any rate the practice of translation into English—one of the most valuable parts of a classical education—may be greatly facilitated by the use of good models; those who acquire the classical languages with little or no help from masters—probably an increasing class—find the book a natural substitute for the living teacher; and there is a large class of readers to whom Latin and Greek are as unattainable as Coptic, yet who are interested in knowing what the ancients thought and said.[1] The question, How may classical poetry be best represented in English? which had long been supposed to be confined to the single issue of Rhyme *v.* Blank Verse, has come in again for hearing, and has been found to open into numberless ramifications. The case for translation into prose, once contemptuously dismissed, has been brought on again by such writers as Mr. Hayward, and has proved to be at least worthy of discussion. Writing prose is now pretty well understood to be as much an art as writing verse; and it is seen consequently that a prose translator does not *ipso facto*

[1] In Germany, where translations of the classics are far more numerous than in England, as may be seen from the fact that Seneca's Tragedies have been three times translated since the beginning of the present century, the demand is said to arise to a great extent from ladies' schools, where girls are taught to read in the vernacular what their brothers are reading in the original.

abandon all pretension to grace and elaboration of style. Blank verse is cultivated for purposes of translation, not by imitators of Milton and Thomson, but by writers who wish to unite the fidelity of a prose version with something of metrical ornament. Attempts are made to cut in between prose and blank verse by the introduction of a sort of rhythmical prose, which again subdivides itself into prose written as prose with a rhythmical cadence, and irregular verse, rather rhythmical than metrical, but still more or less uniform in its structure. Lastly, the old fashion of imitating ancient metres is revived, and the English hexameter in particular is practised with an assiduity worthy of a more promising object, though as yet its fanciers seem scarcely to have extended their experiments from Homer to Virgil. This part of the subject accordingly requires a few remarks from us. As before, we shall speak not only of what may be done, but of what has been done, holding ourselves absolved, however, by the circumstances of the case, as well as by the scantiness of our own knowledge, from saying more than a very few words on the antiquarian part of the question. A portion of the ground, indeed, has been previously travelled in what we said of the translations of the sixteenth century. There was then no sharp line of demarcation between the two kinds of literary activity—that which aspires to poetical honours, and that which aims at producing translations for practical objects. All readers, in one sense or another, were learners; and the office of the translator was virtually that of the commentator, to give his countrymen the means of entering into a new world. But, as time went on, the division of labour came in. The only translation of the kind in the seventeenth century which we happen to have met with, is entitled 'Virgils Eclogves, with his Booke De Apibus, concerning the Governement

and Ordering of Bees: Translated Grammatically, and also according to the proprietie of our English tongue, so farre as Grammar and the verse will well permit. Written chiefly for the good of Schooles, to be used according to the directions in the Preface to the painfull Schoole-Master, and more fully in the Booke called *Ludus Literarius*, or the Grammer-Schoole, *Chap.* 8. London, 1633.' In its full form the page consists of four columns, containing respectively an analysis of the sense, a translation of the words, a verbal commentary, and notes on matters of fact, points of rhetoric, &c.

What precise chronological place among the prose translators of Virgil is occupied by Davidson we cannot say, but there can be no doubt that he has been the most popular. His work was published as early as 1754, if not earlier, and it still continues to be reprinted, even Mr. Bohn being content with presenting it to the world in a revised edition. In its complete form it may certainly claim the praise of comprehensiveness, containing, as it does, not only a translation, 'as near the original as the different idioms of the Latin and English languages will allow,' but 'the Latin text and order of construction on the same page, and critical, historical, geographical, and classical notes, in English, from the best commentators, both ancient and modern, beside a very great number of notes entirely new;' a most ample provision 'for the use of schools, as well as of private gentlemen,' especially if we throw in some seventy-five pages of prefatory matter. Its literary characteristics are such as will sufficiently account for its success, though they are not of that rare order which might have been expected to place it beyond the reach of future rivalry. It keeps fairly close to the Latin, at the same time that it is written in a fluent, respectable English style, such as might easily commend

itself to a person without much poetical taste—the style of an ordinary newspaper or of a Polite Letter-writer. Sometimes the verbiage is too glaringly anti-poetical, and may move even a prosaic reader to a smile, as where 'fœdera jungi' is rendered 'the formation of an incorporative alliance,' or 'heu miserande puer' 'Ah, youthful object of sincere commiseration;' but in general there is not much to find fault with in the language as tried by an ordinary standard. Here is Davidson's version of a famous passage in the Sixth Æneid ('Quis te, magne Cato,' &c., v. 841):—

Who can in silence pass over thee, great Cato, or thee, Cossus, who the family of Gracchus, or both the Scipios, those two thunderbolts of war, the bane of Africa, and Fabricius, in low fortune exalted? or thee, Serranus, sowing in the furrow *which thine own hands had made?* Whither, ye Fabii, do ye hurry me *already* tired? Thou art that Fabius, *justly styled* the greatest, who alone shalt repair our *sinking* state by *wise* delay. Others, I grant indeed, shall with more delicacy mould the breathing *animated* brass; from marble draw the features to the life: plead causes better: describe with the *astronomer's* rod the courses of the heavens, and explain the rising stars: *but* to rule the nations with imperial sway be thy care, *O* Roman! these shall be thy arts; to impose terms of peace, to spare the humbled, and crush *the* proud *stubborn foes.* (The italics, which are the translator's, represent his additions to the original.)

There is not much rhythm here, not much of strictly poetical expression, and no attempt to preserve the peculiar character of Virgil's style; but the language is such as an Englishman might speak or write, and we appeal to the class to whom Davidson dedicates his labours, 'those gentlemen who have the immediate care of education,' whether that is not something.

But it is in the last few years, as we intimated a short

time ago, that these more practical and closer versions of Virgil have chiefly been attempted.

In 1846 Dr. Sewell published a blank version of the 'Georgics,' intended as a help to teachers and pupils in the practice of translation. His object is to make a practical protest against the habit of bald prosaic rendering so common in schools, by substituting a mode of translating which shall be sharply discriminated from prose, both in metre and in language. For this purpose he adopts the ordinary measure of blank heroic verse, and chooses words which are expressly intended to recall, not the ordinary conversational style of the present day, but the distinctive phraseology of the Elizabethan and sixteenth-century writers. In 1854 he brought out a second edition, in which the translation, as he tells us, is entirely rewritten. We have not the means of comparing the two; but it strikes us that, as usual, second thoughts are best. Some expressions, which we remember as uncouth in the first edition, we are glad to find effaced from the second, such as 'pacts eterne,' a version of 'æterna fœdera,' now exchanged for 'changeless pacts;' but the fault of which the word 'eterne' is a symbol may still be observed—a tendency to use words simply because they happen to have the sanction of one or other of the great English poets, without considering whether they harmonise with the general style of the translation, or whether the effect they produce is analogous to anything in Virgil's own language. In attempting, too, to bring out the force of expressions in Virgil, Dr. Sewell is too apt to exaggerate them, as when he renders 'magnos canibus circumdare saltus,' 'vasty lawns with hounds to *belt*,' or 'atræ picis' '*inky* pitch.' The following version of part of the storm in the First Georgic is, we think, a favourable specimen. 'Implentur fossæ' (v. 326):—

The dykes are brimming high, and hollow floods
Are swelling with a roar, and ocean seethes
With steaming friths. The sire himself of gods,
Throned midst a night of storms, launches his bolts
With red right hand. Commotion, wherewithal
Quakes the huge earth: fled have the forest tribes,
And through the nations grovelling panic fear
Low hath laid mortal hearts. With blazing bolt
He doth or Atho or Rhodope or heights
Ceraunian dash on earth. Peal upon peal
Follow south blasts, and thickest sheeted showers.
Now groves, now strands, roar 'neath the tempest wild.

The next version which we have to note is one which perhaps in strictness should have been mentioned earlier in the article, as it is professedly a blank version of the same sort as those which were produced in the eighteenth century—in theory opposed to Dryden, but aiming at the same object—the production of a readable English poem. But, though the Messrs. Kennedy may belong rather to the conservative than to the revolutionary school of translators, we think we are not disparaging their labours in exhibiting them in connection with those of others, who, like them, desire to adhere to the letter of the original, where such adherence can be made not less poetical than a deviation from it. Their translation shows what blank verse is likely to be in fairly competent hands —how far it is likely to give us such a representation of Virgil as cannot be attained by a method like Dryden's. At the same time, as the passage which we intend to examine will be taken from the part of the work performed by Mr. Kennedy sen., we may say at once that we think Mr. Charles Kennedy the superior artist, more terse and forcible than his father, without being less poetical.[1]

[1] Mr. Charles Kennedy has since translated the whole of Virgil on his own account (Bohn, 1861); but we have no space to examine his version.

What measure of absolute success he has achieved may be seen from the following passage from the Fifth Eclogue, v. 56, 'Candidus insuetum,' &c.:—

> New wonders now fair Daphnis doth behold,
> The Olympian threshold, and beneath his feet
> The clouds and stars. Therefore doth new delight
> Exhilarate the woods and rural scenes,
> Pan and the shepherds, and the Dryad maids:
> Wolves prowl not for the flock, nor toils intend
> Harm to the deer: peace gentle Daphnis loves.
> The unshorn mountains joyful to the stars
> Send a spontaneous cry: the rocks, the groves
> Unbidden sing: a God, a God is he.

A version of the whole of Virgil, on a plan substantially the same as Dr. Sewell's, has just been completed by his predecessor at Radley, Mr. Singleton, the first volume having been published in 1855. The chief difference lies in the somewhat greater flexibility of the form, which is rhythmical rather than metrical; but, even in this respect, the two versions are not easily distinguishable, as, while Dr. Sewell has not been concerned greatly to elaborate his blank verse, Mr. Singleton's is in reality blank verse with occasional licenses, a syllable or foot being sometimes added to, sometimes deducted from, the ordinary heroic standard. Mr. Singleton's theory is expounded, not, like Dr. Sewell's, in a short advertisement, but in a long and interesting preface; and he consults further for the poetical taste of his readers by subjoining in foot-notes parallel passages 'from British poets of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries.' What his success has been we shall see by and bye; meantime, we must mention a translator whom he has honoured with his approbation—Dr. Henry Owgan, of Trinity College, Dublin, whose prose version of the

whole of 'Virgil' he classes with Dr. Isaac Butt's prose version of the 'Georgics' as 'very far the most poetical' of all those which he has had an opportunity of seeing. Dr. Butt's we have unfortunately been unable to procure. To Dr. Owgan's we shall return presently. Last on the list, though not last in order of time, comes a translation of the First Six Books of the 'Æneid,' by Dr. James Henry, also an Irishman, under the quaint title of 'Six Photographs of the Heroic Times.' This work again is not metrical, but rhythmical, its peculiarity being that the rhythm is changed from time to time to suit the translator's convenience, pages of trochaic time being succeeded by others where anapæsts are predominant, and these again by ordinary blank verse, a measure which is preserved through the whole of the Fourth Book. The translator had made many experiments before he satisfied himself; and this somewhat heterogeneous assemblage of varieties is the result. If we cannot praise it very highly, we are glad to be able to add that Dr. Henry's labours have been far more successful in another part of the Virgilian field. About the same time with his translation appeared a commentary on the same portion of the 'Æneid,' to which he has given a title not less quaint—'Notes of a Twelve Years' Voyage of Discovery in the First Six Books of Virgil's Æneis'—a work which, though somewhat cumbrous in its form, and disfigured by too frequent an obtrusion of the author's individuality, contains a very great deal that appears to us at once new and true. A writer who has shown himself one of the best commentators on Virgil's poem need not repine that he has not the additional honour of being one of its best translators.

We are now in a position to test these different modes of translation by a comparison of some of their results.

Let us take a passage from the Second Æneid, that in which the bursting of the Greeks into Priam's palace is described with so much power and energy. We give the Latin, as our intention is to scrutinise closely the conformity of the translations. Our list will be headed by an extract from Trapp, of whom we promised to speak again :—

Fit via vi: rumpunt aditus, primosque trucidant
Immissi Danai, et late loca milite complent.
Non sic aggeribus ruptis cum spumeus amnis
Exiit, oppositasque evicit gurgite moles,
Fertur in arva furens cumulo, camposque per omnes
Cum stabulis armenta trahit. Vidi ipse furentem
Cæde Neoptolemum, geminosque in limine Atridas:
Vidi Hecubam, centumque nurus, Priamumque per aras
Sanguine fœdantem quos ipse sacraverat ignes.
Quinquaginta illi thalami, spes tanta nepotum,
Barbarico postes auro spoliisque superbi,
Procubuere. Tenent Danai qua deficit ignis.

vv. 494-505.

TRAPP.

A spacious breach
Is made: the thronging Greeks break in, then kill
The first they meet, and with armed soldiers crowd
The rich apartments. With less rapid force
A foamy river, when the opposing dams
Are broken down, rolls rushing o'er the plain,
And sweeping whirls the cattle with their folds.
These eyes saw Pyrrhus raging, smeared with gore,
And both the Atridæ in the entrance storm,
Amidst a hundred daughters saw the queen,
And Priam on the altars with his blood
Pollute those hallowed fires, which he himself
Had consecrated. Fifty bridal rooms,
So great their hopes of numerous future heirs,
The posts, with trophies and barbaric gold
Magnificent, lay smoking on the ground:
Where the flames fail, the Greeks supply their place.

KENNEDY.

An ingress made by force,
The Greeks admitted slay the first they meet,
And crowd the places all around with troops.
Not with such rage a river pours o'er lands
A swollen flood, and herds with stalls bears down
Through all the plains when it has burst away
From broken banks, and with a foamy whirl
O'ercome opposing mounds. These eyes beheld
Pyrrhus with slaughter rage, and at the gates
The two Atridæ. Hecuba I saw,
Wives of her sons a hundred, and at shrines
Priam the king, defiling with his blood
The fires which he himself had sacred made.
The fifty bridal chambers, which had raised
Hopes of a long posterity, their posts,
Proud with barbaric gold and spoils, fall down.
Greeks plant their footsteps where the flames relent.

SINGLETON.

A way is made by force: the Greeks poured in,
Burst passage, and the foremost massacre,
And wide with soldiery the places fill.
Not so [resistless] when from bursten dams
The foamy river hath escaped away,
And mastered in its eddy barrier mounds,
'Tis carried in a pile upon the tilths
In frenzy, and throughout the champaigns all
The cattle with their cotes it sweepeth off.
I Neoptolemus beheld myself
Raving with butchery, and in the gate
Atreus' twain sons; I Hecuba beheld
And her one hundred daughters; Priam too
Among the altars staining with his blood
The fires which he himself had sanctified.
Those fifty nuptial couches, hope so great
Of children's children, doors with foreign gold
And trophies haught, down tumbled to the earth.
Possess the Danai where fails the flame.

OWGAN.

A path is cleared by force: the thronging Greeks force their way and massacre the foremost, and fill the open space with soldiers. Not so resistless the foaming torrent, when it o'erflows its broken banks and washes down with its flood the obstructing dams, rushes upon the fields in a mass, and from every plain sweeps herds and stalls. I saw myself Neoptolemus revelling in slaughter, and the two Atridæ in the gate: I saw Hecuba and her hundred daughters-in-law, and Priam amid the altars staining with blood the fires his hands had consecrated. Those fifty chambers, so rich a promise of descendants, the doorways rich with barbaric gold, lay prostrate. The Greeks are masters where the fire dies out.

HENRY.

Main strength bursts a passage,
The entrance is forced,
In rush the Danai,
Slaughter the foremost,
And the whole place with soldiery
Fill far and wide.

Less furiously the foaming river,
Whose gushing flood has overcome
And burst the dam's opposing mass
And left its channel, on the fields
Rushes aheap, and drags along
Cattle and stall o'er all the plain.

Myself have seen upon the threshold
Neoptolemus and the twain Atridæ,
Furious and reeking slaughter:
Hecuba and her hundred daughters
Myself have seen, and midst the altars
Priam defiling with his blood
The fires himself had consecrated.
Low lie those fifty spousal chambers,
So rich hope of a teeming offspring,
Low lie those fifty doors superb
With conquered spoils and gold barbaric:
The Danai or the fire have all.

Of the three blank versions of this passage we incline to put Mr. Singleton's first. It does not pretend to Miltonic grandeur, but it is not worse versified than its rivals, and its language gains strength from its closeness to the original. 'Tilths,' a word by which he pregnantly renders 'arva,' is quaint; but it is important here that we should conceive of the fields as tilled, so we prefer it to Mr. Kennedy's 'lands,' or the simple 'fields' of other translators. 'I Neoptolemus beheld myself' is ambiguous, and therefore awkward. 'Couches' is of course a mistranslation for 'chambers.' 'Possess the Danai where fails the flame' is needlessly harsh, though it preserves something of the epigrammatic character of the Latin. Trapp perhaps comes next, as he has more rapidity than Mr. Kennedy; and in a passage like this rapidity is indispensable. But he has various shortcomings, and not a few blemishes. 'Fit via vi,' which he tells us in his note is no pun, but a likeness of sound, which sounds prettily, he practically slurs over altogether. 'The rich apartments' is a poor substitute for 'loca,' and 'late' is left out. The simile is shortened by being stripped of two pieces of Virgilian iteration, 'aggeribus ruptis' being fused with 'opositas evicit gurgite moles,' and 'campos per omnes' dropped after 'in arva.' 'Nepotum,' which is meant especially to fix our thoughts on Priam and Hecuba, is lost in the generality of 'numerous future heirs,' and the precise meaning of 'spes tanta' apparently misunderstood. 'Raging, smeared with gore,' is very far from 'furentem cæde,' which is best rendered by Mr. Singleton's 'raving with butchery.' Mr. Kennedy seems to us to fail in strength throughout. He is injudicious in his management of the simile, reversing the order of the clauses, so as to put the triumph of the torrent in the foreground, and its struggle with obstacles

afterwards; whereas Virgil evidently intended us to pause awhile on the struggle, like the torrent itself, and then to hurry along—like the torrent itself, stronger for the delay. 'These eyes beheld' should not have been exchanged for 'I saw,' thus ignoring Virgil's emphatic repetition of 'vidi.' 'Which had raised hopes of a long posterity' is not poetry, but prose. 'Fall down' does not give the force of the perfect 'procubuere.' 'Greeks plant their footsteps where the flames relent' is pointless where point is wanted: 'plant their footsteps' does not answer to 'tenent,' nor 'relent' to 'deficit.'

Dr. Owgan's translation is respectable, but there is nothing in it which can be called striking; and the exact force of the Latin is not always given any more than in the metrical versions. 'Open space' is poor for 'late loca,' which is doubtless meant to give us a vague, illimitable notion of the royal palace. 'O'erflows' and 'washes down' miss the tense, which Virgil evidently meant to discriminate from that of 'fertur' and 'trahit.' Nor does 'washes down' represent 'evicit.' 'Herds and stalls' hardly gives the sense of 'cum stabulis armenta,' not indicating the close connection between the two, 'the herds and their stalls,' or 'herd, stall, and all.' 'From every plain' seems to us an unhappy use of the distributive; and we see no reason for changing 'per' into 'from.' 'Descendants' is not 'nepotum;' and whether 'postes' are the doorposts or the doors, they are certainly not the doorways, which could not have been 'rich with spoils.' 'Lay prostrate' turns the perfect into an aorist. The best part of the version is the last sentence, where 'tenent' and 'deficit' are both well rendered.

Putting aside the question of the propriety of its Pindaric rhythm, we must allow that Dr. Henry's version has its merits. The first strophe (so to call it) is well

done; the second not so well; the third worst of all. 'Myself have seen' is, we think, a mistake, as the sense seems to require the past, not the perfect; at any rate we may say that the former is the predominant notion. 'Furious and reeking slaughter' is a most unfortunate dilution. 'So rich hope of a teeming offspring' is another instance of blindness to the real force of 'nepotum.' 'The Danai or the fire have all' gives the epigram, but we are not told, what Virgil certainly intended us to understand, that of the two enemies the Greeks were the more indefatigable.

Were it not for fear of tiring our readers, we would gladly continue our examination of these competing translations, feeling as we do that to produce a single passage from each is a little like the uncritical procedure of the man who brought a brick as a specimen of his house. Perhaps, however, we have quoted enough, if not to determine the rank of the translators, at any rate to justify our opinion of the various styles which they have attempted. Not wishing to prejudge the success of any coming poet, who may reclaim for Virgil the rhythm for which Milton it seems is indebted to him, we cannot think blank verse well chosen as a vehicle for close rendering. It has, perhaps, its advantages as an exercise for boys, who may be supposed to be unacquainted with the possible harmonies of poetical prose, and to be incapable of recognising anything as poetry which does not run to the eye in measured lines. But one who can really wield prose will, we think, find it beyond comparison the better instrument. We do not of course deny that English verse *per se* is a better representative of Latin verse than English prose. Mr. Singleton may be right in saying, that if Virgil and Cicero could be got to translate Homer closely into Latin, Virgil's translation

would be the one we should prefer. But we are dealing with those who are neither Virgils nor Ciceros, but simply men of culture, with a good command over their own language, and a good eye for the beauties of their author; and such men, we conceive, will do wisely to try the yet unexhausted resources of prose. Only a great master can handle blank verse so as to give real pleasure to his readers. A versifier of very moderate pretensions may write it with ease, but no one will thank him for it. Blank verse, like other verse, presupposes and promises a certain sustained pitch of poetical elevation, and any descent from it is felt and resented at once. Prose, on the other hand, promises far less; and anything which it gives beyond its promise is accepted with pleasure and surprise. The indeterminate character of its rhythm, which does not require that emphasis should be placed on this or that word, much less on this or that syllable, allows to admit unhesitatingly words which, if introduced into blank verse at all, would be felt to be feeble and burdensome. The passage which we have just been examining supplies an instance in point. Virgil talks of 'Hecubam centumque nurus.' A prose translation need not shrink from the word 'daughters-in-law,' nor from the use of many words which embarrass the writers of verse, and which, though essential to a lucid representation of the sense, add nothing to the poetical dignity of the passage. Thus a vigorous Latin line is turned by Mr. Singleton into two feeble lines of English :—

Si qua est cælo pietas quæ talia curet

becomes—

If any righteousness exist in heaven
Which may concern itself about the like.

If the writer of rhythmical prose cannot be said to be

free either from the temptation or from the compulsion to expand himself, he does himself and his author far less harm by yielding to them. No doubt, as Sydney Smith said, a prose style may often be greatly improved by striking out every other word from each sentence when written; but there are occasions where diffuseness is graceful, and a certain amount of surplusage may sometimes be admitted into harmonious prose for no better reason than to sustain the balance of clause against clause, and to bring out the general rhythmical effect. Brevity is of course the preferable extreme; but redundancy has its charms if a writer knows when to be redundant, as the readers of Mr. De Quincey and Mr. Ruskin are well aware. On the other hand, such rhythmical writing as Dr. Henry's, or Mr. Singleton's, where he is not actually metrical, has no real advantage that we can see over more recognised modes of composition. It gives up the benefits of association, no one in reading it being reminded of anything already existing in English, while the uniformity of its structure imposes virtually as great a restraint on a writer as actual metre. Johnson advised poets who did not think themselves capable of astonishing, and hoped only to please, to condescend to rhyme. Translators who despair of imitating Virgil's diction, and are ambitious only of giving his meaning in a pleasing form, may reasonably be content with prose.

THE ACADEMICAL STUDY OF LATIN.[1]

[2]I TRUST I may be allowed to say that, had I felt myself free to follow my own wishes, I should have inclined to dispense with the custom which prescribes that a Professor, on his inauguration, should deliver an introductory lecture. I do not mean to press the parallel between

[1] This address, which was delivered by Professor Conington in the Theatre, Oxford, December 2, 1854, as his inaugural lecture, has here been reprinted without alteration from the edition published for him in 1855.

[2] The Professorship of the Latin language and literature was constituted by a statute passed by Convocation, March 14, 1854.

Its establishment had been contemplated by the authorities of the University as early as the spring of 1851, and a statute respecting it was put forth in the Easter Term of 1853, proposing to endow it with 300*l.* per annum from the surplus funds of the University press, and in other points somewhat differing from that which has since been sanctioned. Its promulgation, however, was prevented by a proposition from the Society of Corpus Christi, which offered to increase the endowment to 600*l.*, promising ultimately to take the whole charge upon itself, with the view of carrying out the intentions of its founder, referred to in the text of this lecture. A new statute was consequently framed, accepting the liberality of the College, and providing that it should have a voice in the appointment of the Professor; and this was confirmed by Convocation, as mentioned above.

The main provisions of the statute are, that the Professor shall be at least of the degree of M.A., B.C.L., or B.M.; that he shall reside for eight weeks in each of the three academical terms, giving at least two public lectures gratis in each year, and twenty-four private lectures, to be divided, if he pleases, into two equal courses, in each term, these last being for the benefit of junior members of the University, who are to pay the statutable fee, with the exception of those belonging to Corpus Christi College; that he shall explain the language philologically and philosophically, and expound the best authors, using means to test the proficiency of his hearers; and that he shall be liable to dismissal for neglect of duty or immorality by the electing body. This is an official board, consisting of the Vice-Chancellor, the two Proctors, the President, and one of the Fellows of Corpus Christi College, the Regius Professor of Greek, the Camden Professor of Ancient History, the Public Orator, the Professor of Poetry, the Senior Examiner in the School of *Literæ Humaniores*, and the Senior Moderator in the School of Greek and Latin Literature.

The first election was made June 14, 1854.

such a lecture and the preface to a book, which, as we all know, though intended to be the first thing read, is the last thing written, as I am aware, without entering into the various differences involved in the distinction between reading and hearing, that the greater width and indeterminateness of the field which lies before a lecturer, in leaving it to him to choose what he should say on commencing his work, only renders it more obligatory that he should say something. Still, it seems no more than natural that one who has been placed here, not to communicate the results of a past life of study, but to devote a life only just opening to that learning which goes along with teaching, should shrink from a task which appears to contradict the facts of his position, as implying that he has already surveyed the province on which he is but now entering. Such hesitation, however, though most sincerely felt, would, I fear, be unsuited to an occasion like the present. We are met to-day to inaugurate, not merely a Professor, but a branch of professorial study—one which, though as old as the University itself, is to be calculated henceforward in Oxford with new appliances and under new auspices. The very consideration that the institution of the professorship is an experiment at once enhances the difficulty, and enforces the duty of looking forward. I propose, then, to offer a few remarks on the Academical Study of Latin, disposing them so as to touch chiefly on its history and position, the reasons for promoting it, and the manner of pursuing it.

The history of the cultivation of Latin in Oxford is a subject deserving a more elaborate commemoration than the few sentences which I am able to give to it. In the earlier times of the University we see Latin not so much a branch of study as the instrument of study itself—the

common academical language, the medium through which knowledge was communicated and received—enjoying the dubious honours of a vernacular, used, but not analysed, or if analysed at all, tested not by a comparison with other tongues, which were then virtually unknown, but by the rules of an arbitrary grammar. This suicidal supremacy was successfully attacked towards the end of the fifteenth century by the naturalization of Greek in the University, the work of men who were themselves distinguished Latinists, interested not so much in the advancement of one language over another as in the intelligent cultivation of both.[1] Soon after, Wolsey, who had constituted himself the patron of academical progress, sought to give Latin a more solid, though a less invidious, position, by the endowment of a public lecture in Humanity, which took its place along with the newly-introduced language[2] and several of the old sciences. About the same time Bishop Fox included in the foundation of Corpus Christi College a public readership of Latin, first held by the celebrated Ludovicus Vives,

[1] Perhaps the most illustrious of these was Linacre, whose treatise, *De Emendatâ Structurâ Latini Sermonis*, long continued a text-book.

[2] The lectures were in Theology, Civil Law, Physic, Philosophy, Mathematics, Greek, and Humanity. The Humanity Lecture is also spoken of as a lecture in Rhetoric (Fiddes' *Life of Wolsey*, p. 216, &c.), and the two subjects are likely enough to have been connected in teaching. Fox, however, enjoins that *his* Humanity reader shall lecture exegetically on approved Latin authors, whom he specifies, allowing him to read later works on style, such as Valla's *Elegantiæ* and Politian's *Miscellanies*, only in vacations (*Statutes*, c. 21). As Vives held both offices, we may conclude that the duties of the two would be understood in substantially the same manner, though he was a person of various gifts, and is believed to have also been Wolsey's Reader in Civil Law. It is remarkable that in founding Cardinal College, Wolsey made no provision for Greek either in his public or domestic lectureships, while including Humanity in both. He had shown his zeal for Greek, not only in establishing the University lecture, but in interfering to protect the first lecturer in 1519 against the Trojans, whom he seems to have been mainly instrumental in putting down.

the 'mellifluous doctor,'[1] the member of a triumvirate where wit, eloquence, and judgment were said to combine

[1] The statement that the University styled Vives 'the mellifluous doctor' in writing to Wolsey, repeated by Fuller (Worthies, Co. Oxon), Plot (Oxfordshire), Gutch, and Ingram, seems ultimately traceable to Butler's *Female Monarchie, or the Historie of Bees* (p. 23, ed. 2, 1634), which Plot quotes—a strange work, printed in reformed spelling. The letter itself appears to be that marked No. 22, Ep. 76, in Fiddes' *Collection*, and the part referred to runs thus: 'Omnes denique omnium studentium animos mellifluis tuis lectionibus in dies quam optime reficis, auges, et illustras, nec ab incepto tua clementia desistit, sed nova potius nobis parare studet. Retulit enim nobis tuus sacellanus et Oxon. commissarius quam optime meritus novum rhetoricæ artis lectorem et virum disertissimum ab Hispaniâ te nobis compafâsse.' This shows not only that the epithet in question was not applied to Vives' lectures in particular, but that at the time of its application Vives had actually not entered upon his office, or begun to reside regularly in the University, so that it could have had no reference to him whatever. The legend of his bees may have had some foundation in truth, though its coincidence with the metaphor of the apiary, which runs through the Corpus statutes in general, and that about the prælectors in particular, is curious, and perhaps suspicious; while the success of his lectures appears to be attested by the facts that the King and Queen attended him in 1523, and the University began to revive the disused degrees in Grammar, Rhetoric, and Poetry. It is not easy, however, to ascertain how long he resided in Oxford, or in what capacity. His name appears in the original list of Fellows of Corpus named by the founder, July 4, 1517; and there is no doubt that he was their first Humanity lecturer; but it does not appear whether he received the two appointments simultaneously, or when he began to exercise the latter. The above-cited letter of the University, evidently written, as has been remarked, before he had come among them, is dated two years later, 5 Id. Jul. 1519. Wood says that he did not arrive in Oxford till 1523—a statement not shaken by Fiddes (p. 216 sqq.), who misunderstands the letter to Wolsey, and confirmed both by the fact that he had two predecessors in Wolsey's chair, Clement and Lupsett, and also by his own letters, some of which are published in his works (Basle, 1555), others referred to in Fulman's MS. collections in the library of Corpus Christi College. Thus he writes from Louvain, August 15, 1522, that he is thinking of visiting Britain; May 10, 1523, that he is going into Spain by way of Britain; June 16, 1524, that he has left Britain to get married, but means to return at the end of September, which he appears to have done from other letters (Epp. 3 and 13); March 12, 1525, he writes from Oxford, and November 13, 1525, from London: after which he appears to have left England again, but to have returned, though not for any lengthened stay. The notices also do not determine whether he held the Corpus readership and Wolsey's lectureship at once: they speak of him, however, as giving Wolsey's lectures in the dining-hall of Corpus Christi College, which may

in the service of learning. But Wolsey's benefaction was as short-lived as his greatness; and when at last Henry VIII. came to carry out a portion of the intentions of his fallen minister, he did not extend to the old language the encouragement which he bestowed on the new. The colleges, indeed, appear to have taken up the work;[1] and the institution of private lectureships in other societies may have been one reason why the Corpus readers ceased to lecture to the University, and confine their instructions to members of their own body. Still, the position of Latin in the University would seem to have been an anomalous one: English had supplanted it in the services of the Church, and Greek divided with it the attention of the scholar; yet it continued to be the official voice of the University, the common speech of learned men, and refused to abdicate its dignity by becoming a subject of special academical study. We may readily understand how the benefactors who arose from time to time, proportioning their bounty according to the needs of the recipient, chose to associate their names with other departments of professorial teaching: but it is remarkable that more than a century after Wolsey and Bishop Fox, the Laudian system, while including Greek and Hebrew in its elaborate course of study, should only have recognised

admit of various explanations, even if it be not attributed to a confusion by the narrator.

The other members of the triumvirate were Erasmus and Budæus, the latter of whom was praised for wit or genius, the former for eloquence, leaving judgment to Vives. Dupin (xiv. 99, quoted by Jortin, *Life of Erasmus*, p. 207) mentions this as a common saying, but thinks it too complimentary to Vives, whom he will allow to have surpassed the others only in his knowledge of grammar, logic, and rhetoric.

[1] Henry the Eighth's Commissioners in 1535 found a Latin lecture already established in Magdalen College, and established others themselves in New College, All Souls, Merton, and Queen's, which were to serve, not for those colleges alone, but for other societies where there was no such provision.

Latin in the shape of grammar and rhetoric.[1] Yet we can scarcely treat the assumption as an unfounded one, when we recollect the practical familiarity with Latin attained by Addison as a poet, and by Lowth as a prose writer: nor should we forget the direct influence of the University prizes in stimulating the scholarship of Grenville and Wellesley, of Canning and Copleston. At any rate, no one can mistake the attitude of the University since the beginning of the present century: and various examination statutes require proficiency in the study of Latin authors as well as in Latin composition: the scholarships for the encouragement of Latin literature is a University foundation; and in the professorship which is now being inaugurated, the result at once of University and of Collegiate bounty, the objects of the two great revivers of learning in Oxford are at length fulfilled by the union of Wolsey's Humanity lectureship with the institution for the 'sowing and planting' of the Latin language, contemplated by the founder of Corpus.

Brief and imperfect as this sketch has been, I venture to think that it has its purpose, not only as a tribute to the past, such as on an occasion like this it would have been injurious to withhold, but as a help to the right appreciation of our present position. The complaint has recently been made by Cambridge scholars,[2] whose judg-

[1] The conceptions formed of grammar and rhetoric are explained by the statutes which regulate the duties of the Prælectors of the two subjects (Stat. Tit. 4. 2 and 3): 'Prælector Grammaticæ publice Grammaticam legat linguâ Latinâ, vel technice a Prisciano, Linacro, aliove probato Grammaticæ auctore vel critice seu philologice selectos aliquos titulos de antiquitatibus Græcis aut Romanis explicet. . . . Prælector Rhetoricæ publice exponat Rhetoricam Aristotelis, Ciceronis, Quintiliani, aut Hermogenis, quos ita inter se conferat ut ex iis artis præcepta in unum corpus redigat.' Compare with these the statutes of the Greek and Hebrew Professorships, where the study of the literature is enjoined.

[2] The writers alluded to are Dr. Donaldson (*Varronianus*, ed. 2, pp. xiv. sqq.) and Mr. Paley (*Propertius*, p. xxii.).

ment I am bound to respect on private no less than on public grounds, that the study of Latin is not flourishing in England; and I have reason to believe that it finds an echo in the convictions of some among ourselves. We have abandoned, it is said, the old appliances without taking up the new: the standard of Latin writing in University examinations is confessedly low: ignorance of Latin is tolerated by those who require an exact acquaintance with Greek; Greek literature has of late been successfully cultivated by Englishmen, while in Latin we have still to depend on the Continent. I should be sorry to underrate our national shortcomings in scholarship as contrasted with the attainments of the Germans; but I believe that some at least of the facts which seem to show that there has been a peculiar falling off in the study of Latin have not been rightly interpreted. We are hardly entitled to assume a uniformity in the experience of the two Universities; still less may we argue from one public school to another, as it is notorious that while some are supposed to cultivate Greek to the prejudice of Latin, others, and those by no means the least distinguished, have the reputation of preferring Latin to Greek. In the practice of Latin, as of Greek, verse composition, our education is allowed to be greatly superior to that which can be obtained on the Continent; and *if* the Latin prose written now-a-days be worse than that which was produced in the last generation, it certainly is not because the imitation of Cicero has given place to that of Plato or Demosthenes. Nor can I admit, so far as my own experience goes, that the rule of attainment in Latin is less exacting than that which we apply to Greek. It is no reproach to the requirements of our system that we have nothing in Latin answering to the canons of Porson and Elmsley. Their discoveries reflect not only on the sagacity and

industry which effected them, but on the ignorance of transcribers and previous scholars, which for centuries confounded the language of Homer with the language of the Attic writers, and the metre of tragedy with the metre of comedy. In a word, it is not that Greek is better understood than Latin, but that Latin, till a comparatively short time ago, had always been better understood than Greek. Our Latin dictionaries, indeed, are still unfortunately compilations from foreign works, and the only history of Roman literature on a considerable scale which we possess is meagre and unsatisfactory: but the last few years have produced at least one Latin grammar of authority, and we may hope, ere long, to see the fragment which Arnold left completed by the publication of standard histories of republican and imperial Rome. The general neglect in this country of the antiquarian part of philology involves the sources of the Greek language no less than the early languages of Italy. Meantime, we may not unreasonably hope that the advance of our philosophical education is gradually introducing an appreciation of the true nature of language sufficient to compensate for those losses, more apparent than real, but in any case inevitable, which the practical disuse of Latin may entail on the University. We cultivate Latin not as the vernacular of a supposed commonwealth of scholars, but for the historical value which attaches to it, both in itself, and as containing the records of the thought and feeling of a large section of the ancient world; and while we retain the practice of imitative composition as a means of realising to ourselves the form as well as the spirit of that majestic literature, we need not be anxious in our own criticisms to clothe the mind of the nineteenth century in the body of the first, or expect that we can apprehend the civilisation of the past through any other medium than that in which we

ourselves live and breathe. The tendency of our academical history throughout has been to assimilate more and more the study of Latin to the study of Greek; and we shall do well to accept its guidance.

But though in the present condition of the study of Latin, I see no signs of decay or depreciation, but simply the natural effect of the introduction of our own language as the instrument and Greek as a rival object of knowledge, I cannot say that the reasons for promoting it, as generally apprehended, are as strong now as they were, or as, in my judgment, they ought to be. Now that the incontestable advances made in Greek scholarship have awakened our minds to a sense of the power and beauty of the poetry, the oratory, the history, and the philosophy of the Hellenic race, such as was not possible in the education of the last century, it is not to be wondered at that there should be a disposition to repudiate the traditional admiration of Roman literature as misplaced or excessive—to discriminate sharply between the masters and their imitators, between the intellectual conquerors and those who submitted to receive a culture which they could not have originated, and were not even able fully to appropriate. It may, perhaps, be conceded that the language of Rome is not inferior in educational value to that of Greece. An inflected language with a highly elaborate syntax, Latin may challenge comparison with any, as a means of mental discipline. On historical grounds, no tongue can possess stronger interests for civilised humanity than the speech of that victorious city, which, beginning with almost daily struggles for life with the petty tribes of its own narrow peninsula, succeeded in breaking to pieces the power of one nation after another, and finally in its imperial decline gave laws to the world. Language is always more truly national than literature: they act and

re-act on each other, but the broad distinction remains, that one is the spontaneous product of the nameless many, the other the artificial creation of the illustrious few; and though the remnants of early Latin are scanty and imperfect, its formal part—that which makes it what it is—was in being long before the days when, as Horace expresses it, the Roman sat down to rest after the Punic wars, and speculated what might be made out of Sophocles, and Thespis, and Æschylus. But it is too late to expect that any single language, except it be the vernacular, will continue to be studied for educational purposes apart from its literature, at a time when comparative philology is exhibiting to us the structure of articulate human speech in all its world-wide extent, and a more profound psychological analysis is searching for the principles of universal grammar in the unfathomed depths of the individual mind. What, then, are the grounds for recommending the minute study of Roman literature to one who has been taught truly to estimate the literature of Greece?

The answer, I believe, lies on the surface: it is to be found in the historical position actually occupied by Roman literature, in relation both to that which went before and to that which has followed it.

In speaking of Roman literature as imitative, it must not be forgotten that the reproach is not peculiar to it, but attaches to the whole of the literature of modern Europe.[1] Greece, in its independent, instinctive development, set the example which subsequent nations have followed with more or less of distinct consciousness. Even if we choose to consider this conscious effort after an external standard as fatal alike to national and individual genius, we must admit it to be an inevitable evil, involved

[1] Compare Mure's *History of Greek Literature*, i., pp. 129 sqq., 135 sqq., 142 sqq.

in the very position of those who have a preceding civilisation to reflect upon. Rome may seem to have been more of a copyist than any of its successors, partly as being actually more indebted to Greece, partly from the lateness of its intellectual growth, which suggests the notion of rational deliberation rather than of creative energy; but the difference must not be exaggerated in either case. If modern nations have followed Greece less closely than Rome did, it is attributable to the fact, among other causes, that they have had Rome as well as Greece to follow; nor will the long barrenness of the Roman intellect prejudice the judgment of those who bear in mind that the Punic wars were in the life of the Eternal City only what the war with Persia was in the briefer history of Athens, and that even now the true literature of modern Germany, though one of the richest that Europe can boast, is scarcely more than a century old. Roman literature is not without its interest for the enthusiastic student, even where it is purely imitative. A skilful artist will often be more honourably employed in copying a great work, than in labouring on his own account. What he gives is his interpretation of the original—far inferior, no doubt, even in the sight of the shallowest perception, to that which he represents, but sure to reveal beauties which might otherwise have concealed themselves from a more observant eye. It is this principle which constitutes the true value of a really good translation—not as superseding the original, even to the worst scholar, but as explaining it, even to the best: and the greater freedom allowed to an imitator only enhances the critical importance of his labours, as he need not simply copy, but may amplify and illustrate. Thus an imitative literature is peculiarly adapted, by the determinateness of the art employed, for showing what literature really is: the intense conscious-

ness of the writer can hardly fail to communicate itself to his readers; and the very narrowness of his conception is in some sort an advantage, as enabling them more successfully to disentangle the confused mass of their impressions. No one would now think of seriously comparing the 'Iliad' and the 'Æneid;' but the latter affords the better study of the laws and conditions under which epic poetry is produced.

Yet it would be a great mistake to suppose that imitation is the only characteristic of post-Grecian literature, or that it furnishes any exception to the uniform law of progress and development which appears to govern everything realised in time. Perfect as it is in its own symmetry, the literature of Greece was not only subject to critical changes, but itself formed a stage in a process yet unfinished, and that not as a golden age, followed by a succession of baser metals, but rather as a heroic foretime, ushering in periods of historical life; which, though constantly looking back to it as the source of light and inspiration, have yet a purpose and a being of their own. Few, indeed, are disposed to deny the originality of much of the literature which they see daily living around them; but it is not generally felt that what appears so fresh and new is in large measure due to modifications introduced by the great writers of the later Republic and the Empire. In spite of the various causes which tended to assimilate the literary character of the two nations—causes each of which would well bear the burden of a separate discussion—the animating principle of kindred though not identical mythologies, the influence of like conceptions of politics and society, the common peculiarities of a hearing as opposed to a reading age, as seen in their effects on the form of composition, the similarity of pronunciation, leading the Latin poets to discard any attempts at originality

in their metres, there were features in the intellectual culture of Rome which might fairly be called national, if a more careful observation did not lead us to regard them not as characteristic of this or that people, but as marking the general progress of letters. One of the most noticeable facts in literature is the gradual encroachment of prose upon poetry—a change which has been going on from the first, and of which evidently we do not yet see the end. In later times it has received a mighty impulse from the invention of printing, as it probably did before from the discovery of the art of writing: but its process has not been less certain, mechanical appliances remaining the same, and it may fairly be accepted as a test of literary development. That Rome affords an instance of it may be inferred at once from the fact, which most would admit, that its prose writers are on the whole superior in excellence to its poets. Epistolary composition, which in Greece appears scarcely to have been studied at all as an art, except by the Sophists and forgers of the later schools, in Rome is cultivated by the most accomplished men of the best ages. Satire, the one kind of poetry to which Quintilian could point as the indigenous growth of his country, is seen, in the hands of its most finished artist, to be closely allied to prose; just as under the altered circumstances of the present day it finds its representative in the pamphlet, the article, or the moral essay. The same advance in the power of adapting the form to the matter may be seen in the Roman treatment of history. Thucydides knew no better way of exhibiting his consummate knowledge of character, than by inventing long speeches such as his historical personages *might* have spoken—in other words, by confounding history with the drama. In Tacitus, on the other hand, the analysis of human actions and motives is carried on much more directly the two

elements, the narrative and the philosophical, were felt each to have its proper place; and the same scheme embraces both as such in their individual distinctness. Again, we perceive in Rome, more definitely than in any of the centres of Grecian life, the gradual withdrawal of literary men into a separate class, which, though in some respects prejudicial to themselves, as well as symptomatic of intellectual deterioration in the community at large, is a natural consequence of an increasing devotion to literature; while it may co-exist, as our own experience shows, with extensive progress in popular education. The causes which contributed to this result were various—the possession of a borrowed culture, which had to be mastered by the knowledge of technical rules—the constitution of society, encouraging a relation which we actually express by a metaphor borrowed from Roman civil usages, that of patronage; but the fact is palpable, and the picture of things in the Seventh Satire of Juvenal, anticipating so vividly the condition of letters in the London of the eighteenth century, is one to which we should in vain seek a precise parallel at Athens, or even, perhaps, at Syracuse or Alexandria. On the one hand, the division of labour tends to shut men up into particular departments, and we hear of the historian by profession as well as of the poet, the rhetorician, and the grammarian: on the other, the increase of skill in composition, as such, leads a writer to attempt the union of qualifications hitherto kept distinct, and Cicero aims at being at once the Roman Plato and the Roman Demosthenes, not to speak of his less successful efforts after the crown of poetry. Both were signs of the same general tendency, and mark a peculiar conception of literature as an art, itself the result of that advance in self-consciousness which distinguishes a later period

from an earlier, and is in fact a condition of mental progress in humanity as in individuals.

But if these indications of growth seem slight and almost imaginary in themselves, there is a light in which they may be seen to be real and striking. We are entitled, as has been before intimated, to claim as belonging to Rome, not only what it did for itself, but what it has wrought in the nations which succeeded it. What Greece was to Rome, Rome has been to modern times—the great educator, the humanizer of its barbarous conqueror, the mother of intellect, art and civilisation. That part of our culture which we have not worked out for ourselves, or received from contemporary nations, we owe almost wholly to Rome, and to Greece only through Rome, just as our language, saturated throughout with Latin, has assimilated but few particles of Greek. If the Romans viewed the great works of Greece through the medium of Alexandrian criticism, our fathers viewed them through the medium of Roman imitation. 'Paradise Lost' may ascribe its form, and much of its detail, to the conception of Homer framed by the educated men of later Greece, accepted by Virgil and the epic writers of Augustan Rome, and finally sanctioned by the heroic muse of modern Italy. The foreign element of the Shaksperian drama is traceable, ultimately, not to Æschylus and Aristophanes, but to Plautus and Seneca. The tragedy of the Restoration period is formed on the model of the French, which itself copies the declamatory dialogues of the Roman sophist. In the eighteenth century, the influence of Rome is yet more direct and exclusive: in fact, we may say that an acquaintance with the principal Latin writers is the only way to a literary appreciation of that phase—the most brilliant, as some may still esteem it—of English authorship. The position

of the Augustan era is reversed: it had openly rivalled Greece, and it is now itself openly rivalled by England. There is the same consummate dexterity which is characteristic of all high imitation, the same universal ambition to be eminent not only in one department of imaginative composition, but in several. The great Augustan artist would be Theocritus, Hesiod, and Homer in one: the poet of the reigns of Anne and George I. aspires to unite the features of Ovid, Horace, and Virgil. The two forms of composition which have been mentioned as the peculiar property of Rome are precisely those which are most congenial to this Roman period of the English mind. Pope and Swift recal Cicero and Atticus; nearly every wit, whatever his intellectual temperament, writes a satire or an epistle; and two of the greatest not only follow Horace and Juvenal, but expressly and directly copy them. This may now be, to many of us, merely a thing of a bygone time: the deliberate imitation of Latin models was impossible after men became alive to the power and beauty of earlier and later literature. But development does not cease with imitation; and the features which I mentioned just now as showing that Roman literature was growing and advancing, are coincident, at least, with some of those which would at once be pointed to as the effects of the revolt of the past and the present generation of Englishmen against the eighteenth century and its classical superstition. In literature, as in history and actual life, no effort can set us free from the laws and conditions of our being: the direction of the will may be changed, but it is determined, not the less, by the causes which were appointed to preside over the formation of the character at the outset.

It is on these grounds that I would venture to recommend the study of Latin literature, as such, to anyone

inclined to question its value, as I believe that to neglect it would be to neglect a whole epoch in the history of letters, most important intrinsically, and most unequivocal in its influence on ourselves. As the first to feel and obey the impulse given by Greece, Rome might well excite our attention; as the communicator of that impulse to modern Europe, it sublimates attention into sympathy and earnest regard. That which has actually had so much to do with the formation and discipline of a culture which the lapse of many generations of men has proved to have been no weakling, but a vigorous birth, can never cease to be studied wherever that culture is made an object of paramount interest. To allow it to pass into the shade because we have come to appreciate its relation to Greek literature more truly than heretofore, is as idle a thought as it confessedly would be to speculate on the larger results, as we may deem them, which would have accrued to humanity if Greece had been permitted to influence later ages without any interposing medium. Indeed, the historical position of Roman literature enables it to vindicate itself. We are not left to our own choice whether or no we should study that which, being as we are, we cannot afford to forget. The scholar may feel that Latin, as compared with Greek, is but 'moonlight unto sunlight;' but if the time should come when those who wish to preserve a classical education for the generality of instructed Englishmen find it necessary to abandon one of the classical languages in order to save the other, it is not difficult to foresee that practical convenience will overturn other considerations, and plead for the language which for so many centuries has been held in England to be the symbol of cultivation, against one of whose existence there is scarcely anything in our daily speech to remind us, and whose very alphabet has to be made a matter of

learning. Happily, to us in this place the alternative does not present itself; we have not to choose between a distant and a proximate benefactor—between originality and utility. Homer and Virgil, Pindar and Horace, Thucydides and Tacitus, Demosthenes and Cicero, may be studied side by side: we may acknowledge the commanding pre-eminence of the master, at the same time that we admire the skill and discrimination which the pupil has shown, not only in following, but in deviating from his model. The same method of study will enable us to acquire both: the specific differences of the knowledge to be realised will occasionally involve a difference in the manner of knowing; but the powers of mind called forth are the same, and the discipline administered to them partakes of the same character, though it may be not always in the same degree. Of this part of the subject I have now to speak.

The object which the study of literature proposes may be described as the entering into the mind of men eminent in thought and in power of expression. It may seem hardly worth while to note that it is requisite not only that the student should gain certain conceptions of power, beauty, and the like, but that they should be such as the writer intended to convey. In the case of other things of a similar nature, the distinction is one which scarcely occurs to us. When we look at a painting, we seldom set ourselves deliberately to discover the intention of the artist; we know, that though we may fail to understand all that was meant, we are not liable to substitute a wrong meaning for the right, much less to perceive graces which really result from accident or exist only in our own lively fancy. Words are acknowledged to be a more palpable and less transparent medium than forms or colours: still, in the average course of a vernacular literature, the

instances are comparatively rare where a man has to ask himself whether he comprehends what he is reading; and even then the knot is generally solved, not by investigation and study, but by reflection and an appeal to common sense. Truth, as such, seldom or never has to be made a distinct object of pursuit: it seems to come unasked, and so rarely obtains even a passing glance of recognition. But when we approach the literature of another country, our view is at once changed, if not reversed. Then the difficulty of the medium is seen to be such that the thoughts which lie beyond are apt to appear easy in comparison. If the language is a modern one, the labour will be more or less mechanical. The method of discovering truth consists chiefly in looking out words in the dictionary; that done, a little experience of idiom and style supplies the rest. The trouble may be considerable for the time, but it is short, and the student soon comes to read a foreign work as he would read one written in English, and finds the process of interpretation go on intuitively. It is precisely here that the real difficulty of studying an ancient language begins. To the schoolboy reading Latin and Greek is virtually the same as reading French or German; to the scholar there is all the difference in the world. The books of reference which he uses, the lexicons and the grammars, are far more elaborate and more helpful than anything which he could obtain for studying a modern language; but they remind him that the need of assistance is far greater. They furnish him not solely or principally with patent and unquestioned facts, such as a few days' travel might verify, and the slightest authority may consequently guarantee; the certainties in which they deal are frequently such as it requires the toil of months or years to discover, and perhaps the reputation of a life to accredit. He finds

that others have thought and investigated, not that he may be spared the trouble of thought or investigation, but that he may think and investigate for himself. The sense of many of the words before him is to be made out, not on direct evidence, but by a long induction of instances; the full appreciation of an idiom or construction has often to be gained by the inward exertion of sympathetic thought, as well as by wide reading; nay, the very text of the author is often itself a matter of doubt, so that the critic has, as it were, to tell both the dream and the interpretation. History has to be ransacked in the hope of finding the key to an indirect allusion in a single line; the windings of a writer's mind have to be tracked not only in his own works, but in those of the contemporaries with whom he lived familiarly, or the predecessors whom he regarded with filial reverence; the arrow, like that in the fable, has to be aimed at a mark which the archer's eye is allowed to see only as reflected in some other substance. In a word, he is constantly brought to feel that the language with which he has to do is a *dead* language, buried under the weight of interposed centuries, and only to be reached by one who has skill and resolution to penetrate through their manifold incrustations.

There are, I know, persons to whom the enumeration of the obstacles to the understanding of the classics suggests regretful, if not contemptuous, feelings. They lament the waste of labour spent, not in the discovery of the unknown, but in the recovery of the lost, and make light of divinations of truth which the unrolling of a single new manuscript may supersede or disprove. The complaint is the same which is put so epigrammatically by the author of 'Hudibras,' where he says of Time and his daughter Truth,

> 'Twas he that put her in the pit
> Before he pulled her out of it.

I need hardly say, that if valid at all, it is valid, as Butler doubtless intended it, against all historical research. There, as here, we have the spectacle of human thought toiling painfully to repair the losses caused by human thoughtlessness, as well as by the unavoidable chances of time: there, as here, the utmost that can be done may disappear before the contradiction or the fuller affirmation of an accidental discovery. But is the case so different as regards other parts of knowledge? Is not the attainment of all intellectual truth a labour which might have conceivably been spared to us; nay, which doubtless would have been spared, had the mere possession and enjoyment of truth been the end which we were meant to compass? Even the very word enjoyment, so used, implies a misconception.[1] The intellect enjoys truth, not by simply contemplating it, but by feeding on it, by assimilating it, and thus making it instrumental to the perception of further truth, which in its turn ministers to other and higher realisations. The toil of getting and the joy of using are not, as in other things, separate, but identical: if distinguishable in common speech, it is only as we may choose to distinguish parts of a process which is really uniform and indivisible. In this sense, no one need hesitate to join in Lessing's celebrated profession, that if called upon to choose between truth and the search after truth, he should prefer the latter. It is not hard to see that, the constitution of our minds remaining as it is, the immediate communication of all knowledge would not be a blessing,

[1] Compare Bp. Butler, *Sermon* xv. (*Works*, vol. ii. p. 233. Oxford ed. of 1835.) 'Whoever will in the least attend to the thing will see that it is the gaining, not the having of it (knowledge), which is the entertainment of the mind.' So Sir W. Hamilton (*Discussions on Philosophy*, &c., p. 39): Speculative truth is subordinate to speculation itself; and its value is directly measured by the quantity of energy which it occasions—immediately in its discovery, mediately through its consequences.'

but an incalculable curse. 'There is,' indeed, 'nothing better for a man than that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour'—that he should accept the knowledge and discipline which each day brings, instead of deferring his satisfaction to the end of a pursuit which, rightly understood, never can be ended on earth, and which, it followed only in the hope of some ulterior reward, even though that reward be truth itself, will but yield 'vanity and vexation of spirit.' Thus the question is, not whether we *must* seek for truth, but whether we *may*; not whether the child can be excused his task, but whether he is to be allowed the gratification of guessing the riddle. Whoever may complain of the difficulties which beset the pursuit of classical scholarship, assuredly it will not be the scholar himself. He knows it is precisely by means of these difficulties that he is made perfect in his work. If he is led to repine at times that knowledge should be hidden, it is not as wishing to evade the pains of searching, but because he is already longing to bestow his labour on some other part of the field. It is nothing to him that his time has often to be spent on minute and seemingly trivial points, for he feels that the smaller is to be estimated by the standard of the greater, and that in accepting his calling he has accepted a duty, more or less defined, to everything that appertains to it. The task of recovering a lost word or allusion is not resented as a gratuitous hardship, but embraced as a welcome boon, which compels the student, as it were, to enter the author's laboratory, not as a spectator, but as a fellow-worker, and rewards the restoration with something of the same delight which must have attended the original invention. It is his labour that he has to go down among those who have long been dead; but there is conscious pleasure in every step of the way, and it is his glory that he can break their

sleep and revive them, that he can make them drink the blood of life and speak living words, that he can endow them, if not with the gift of prophecy, at least with the human power of memory.

I have anticipated much of what I had to say about the manner of studying Latin literature; but I feel that if my conception of it be a true one, its worth is to be appreciated, not by generalities, but by a more detailed account. There is something ambitious in the term 'method,' as applied to so simple and obvious a process; and yet, when we think of its capabilities as an intellectual discipline, we shall hardly be able to find a more appropriate name for it. I cannot hope to explain it so that the statement shall not appear the merest truism; indeed, I hardly wish to do so. The way to study Latin literature is to study the authors who gave it its characters: the way to study those authors is to study them individually in their individual works, and to study each work, as far as may be, in its minutest details. For other purposes, we may be satisfied with a general view of an author's mind, or with a cursory perusal of some one or more of his writings; but the peculiar training which is sought from the study of literature is only to be obtained, in anything like its true fulness, by attending, not merely to each paragraph or each sentence, but to each word, not merely to the general force of an expression, but to the various constituents which make up the effect produced by it on a thoroughly intelligent reader. Nothing but practical experience can give any notion of the number and variety of the subjects of knowledge and thought presented by the careful study even of a small portion of a work, without travelling beyond those considerations which properly belong to the particular passage, as having been present, consciously or unconsciously, to the mind of

the author. Perhaps it will not be thought tedious or inappropriate if I venture, for the sake of clearness, as well as of variety, to analyse, in this spirit, a very short passage, which must be familiar to us all—the first seven lines of the First Æneid of Virgil. I am not sorry to choose one upon which I have myself scarcely anything to offer beyond what may be found in the ordinary commentators, such as Wagner or Forbiger, because my object is to show the improvement which may be derived from this study at any time, as an every-day exercise, not the discoveries to which it may occasionally conduct us, interesting and encouraging as these undoubtedly are.

The first inquiry respects the four lines which in many copies are prefixed to the 'Æneid.' We examine the external evidence, and are struck by one fact, among others, that the testimony which would exclude them tells still more forcibly for excluding the passage about Helen in the Second Æneid: nor can we well escape without gaining some rough notion about the authorities for the text of Virgil. We examine them internally, noting not only their own peculiarities of expression, but their relevancy to the passage which they are intended to introduce. We discuss the probability whether Virgil in particular, or any poet of the Augustan age, would begin by a reference to himself, or rush at once upon his subject and his hero. We estimate the collateral testimony of those contemporary or subsequent writers who mention the words *Arma virum*, as if they were the key-note to the whole 'Æneid.' After thus pausing on the threshold, we proceed to the work itself. We ask whether the word *Arma*, bursting thus suddenly on the ear, may not be meant to imply the contrast between this and Virgil's other poems, which the interpolated lines so clumsily endeavoured to express. We compare Virgil's opening with Homer's, and

with the apparently parallel passage in one of the Cyclic writers, noting that he begins in the first person, like the poet ridiculed by Horace, and defers his invocation of the muse till afterwards. We observe that Virgil himself uses the words *Arma virum* together elsewhere in the 'Æneid,' as if he intended them to be linked by a real connection. We remark on the sense of *primus*, not as excluding an earlier journey, but as pointing to the beginning of Roman history, and thus reminding us of the purpose of the Augustan epic. The word *Italiam* opens another question, having actually given rise to a treatise by a German scholar,[1] which is highly spoken of, on the anomalies of quantity introduced by the Roman epic writers. *Fato* leads us to inquire into Virgil's conception of destiny and of its relation to the power of the gods, in short into his theological belief. We then come to a question of reading between *Lavina* and *Lavinia*, when we have to consider the imitation of the passage by Propertius, and to observe the circumstances under which Virgil elsewhere employs a synizesis. In the third line, we note the rhetorical pleonasm of *ille*, established by other passages of Virgil, remarking on the use of pronouns, both in Greek and Latin, to express other than pronominal relations, and on the grammatical considerations involved therein. The fourth line presents a difficulty of interpretation in the words *Vi superum*, the common rendering of which has recently been disputed as implying that Juno acted in concert with the gods, whereas the whole tenor of the 'Æneid' represents her as Æneas' sole enemy. Thus we have to examine Virgil's theology again, as well as to decide on the possible meaning of the words, considered grammatically. *Memorem iram* recals us to Homer, and reminds us also of the μνάμων μῆνις of

[1] Köne: *Ueber die Sprache der Römischen Epiker.* Münster, 1840.

Æschylus. In the next line, the construction of *dum* with the imperfect conjunctive opens a subtle grammatical question, the answer to which is to be sought in a consideration of the nature and force of the conjunctive mood. The two remaining lines introduce us to questions of mythology and antiquities:—what the *Penates* were, how they differed from the *Di Magni*, why the *Albani patres* are so called, and, generally, what was Virgil's view of the beginnings of Rome—all to be settled by a careful reference to other passages of the 'Æneid,' which in their turn frequently start fresh questions, even when discussed only so far as is necessary for purposes of illustration. Lastly, we are led to regard the exordium as a whole, admirably adapted as it is throughout to express the poet's full sense of the greatness of his subject—a broad and striking contrast to the unconsciousness of Homer, who presents himself as the teller of a wonderful story, not as the author of a grand national poem.

Those who are accustomed to a careful study of the classics, will see that I have by no means exhausted all that could fairly be said on these lines, or in other words, all that is required for a complete appreciation of them, at the same time that I have been careful not to make them mere pegs on which to hang irrelevant questions in philology or æsthetics. Yet, surely the amount of education which such a study pre-supposes or imparts is very considerable. In considering his author's general character in itself, or in contrast with that of another, the student is led to take broad views of rhetorical or poetical art: in analysing particular expressions, and disclosing the images which they involve, he is made to trace that art in its details. He has to skirt the undefined bounds which separate rhetoric from grammar, and ascertain the conditions under which words, grammatically appropriated to

one conception, can be put for those denoting another. He is frequently called to investigate grammar itself, by the occurrence of constructions which have to be explained by some general law, or left unexplained under the shelter of some unquestionable idiom. At other times, he will have recourse to comparative philology, to illustrate a word or usage, of the true nature of which the writer himself, learned as he may have been in the antiquities of his country's language, had but a dim confused consciousness. The casual allusions scattered through the work will familiarise him with much historical knowledge: the subject of the work, even though it may have no direct bearing on history, with much also. This enumeration is a very imperfect one, even as compared with my own conception and experience; yet it will be seen that it includes many of the elements which are usually held to constitute a general cultivation, thus ensuring a discipline of the various parts of the mind, more comprehensive, probably, than can be afforded by any other single subject of knowledge. But this is not all. These several lines of thought and research are not followed for themselves, but as means for something further: they make up the method by which the truth of the writer's meaning is to be attained. However great their heterogeneity in relation to each other, in this point they all converge. It is difficult to secure anything like completeness in the method, as no man can hope to realise all the aspects in which a word or conception has appeared to the mind of another, especially when separated from him by a gulf of centuries: it is seldom that we can expect to make the best even of our incompleteness, as in any single track of investigation we are liable to meet with failure, or, at any rate, with only partial success. Such defects, however, do not destroy the value of the results which *can* be obtained; and it

only requires a careful use of the various means in our power to convince us that the method of interpretation is one that really deserves the name, leading not to specious plausibilities, but to substantial truths. I know not how it may be in the case of other sciences, but I can testify to the genuine intellectual satisfaction which the mind receives when some discovery, in itself, perhaps, of quite minor importance, a latent metaphor, a concealed imitation, the substitution of one insignificant word or inflexion of a word for another, or even the mere position of a word, hitherto overlooked, and now noticed accidentally, has flashed light on an entire passage, and a vague sense of disproportion has given place to a clear perception of harmonious symmetry. Or again, where the lighting up has been not sudden, but gradual, it is not the less reassuring to recall the first aspect of a sentence, seemingly complete in itself, and sufficient to the eye of the ordinary reader, and compare it with the full appreciation which is gained at last, when every point has been accurately scrutinised, and the student once more comes to survey it as a whole. Thus the exegetical study of the classics, as it appears to me, fulfils the two great conditions of an educational instrument: it gives at once a general and a special discipline: it encourages exuberant variety of interest along with severe precision of aim. I do not say that it has always had this effect on the mind of the student, but I believe that where it has failed to do so, the fault has not been in the method, and that if even really great scholars have sometimes been narrow and one-sided, they have been so far less complete, not only as men, but as scholars. I believe also that, like all methods,[1] it has

[1] 'Nostra enim via inveniendi scientias exæquat fere ingenia, et non multum excellentiæ' eorum relinquit, cum omnia per certissimas regulas et demonstrationes transigat.'—Bacon: *Nov. Org.*, lib. i., aph. cxxii.

a salutary tendency to equalise human capacities, so that though the greatest reward will always fall to his lot who, having the greatest natural powers, economises them most prudently and disposes them to the best advantage, there will yet be an abundant harvest which inferior minds are certain to reap, by the mere fact of their honest compliance with prescribed rules; while those who go out in their own strength, disdaining all labour that appears uncongenial, find for the most part barrenness and comparative scarcity.

Such a mode of reading, I need hardly say, cannot but be a work of time; even a professed teacher can scarcely expect to attain so close a familiarity with more than a very few authors; for a learner, who does not intend to pursue the study, a thorough mastery of one or two books, or parts of books, is perhaps the utmost that can be proposed. But I am sure that a single work, studied in this manner, may be of indefinite use to the mind; and though of course he who has read much will have an advantage, in explaining a text, over him who has read little, yet, on the other hand, under the treatment of a diligent student, an author becomes, to a great extent, his own interpreter, and the various books of reference which come into requisition will indicate collateral sources of information, which may obviate, if they cannot supply, the want of strictly independent research. It need not, it ought not to exclude the more rapid and cursory reading of the principal classics. What I have said of the peculiar value of Roman literature as a regularly developed whole, will show that I would have the student's acquaintance with it general, as well as particular; extended, as well as intimate; but no diffusive reading, however it may expand the views, can be accepted as a substitute for that scrupulous training in the minutiæ of thought and feeling, of

grammar and rhetoric, of historical allusion and textual criticism, all rigorously directed to one end, which it is my present object to set forth. And I must express my pleasure that the statute which prescribes the duties of my professorship gives me peculiar facilities for promoting this special kind of study in the courses of private lectures which I am required to deliver terminally. I think I can hardly be wrong in adopting a line of teaching which appears not only desirable in itself, but peculiarly open to me in the present circumstances of the University, when the many different duties which press upon the tutors of colleges, and, though in a less degree, upon private tutors, are not likely to leave them time or inclination for following out so elaborate, and, as it may appear, so tedious a process. And if this mode of instruction be found to have its use, as I trust it will have, in spite of the deficiencies of the teacher, in cultivating those who are designed for practical life, as well as in raising up scholars able and willing to criticise and investigate on their own account, it may perhaps suggest the expediency of some more direct provision than at present exists for encouraging it by means of examinations and University distinctions. In the examination before Moderators, the number of books presented by candidates for honours is too great to admit of a thorough and searching study of the details of each, not to mention the impossibility of setting up so high a standard in an examination which so many are expected to pass. In the examinations for the University scholarships, though the general demands are more severe, the entire want of prescribed books renders any requirement a matter of uncertainty, the candidate being ignorant whether it is likely to be made, the examiner whether it is likely to be responded to. The ideal of an examination in classical scholarship appears to me to be one which,

while encouraging general reading, by allowing an examiner to select any passage he pleases from any author, should, at the same time, stimulate special study, by prescribing two or three books, or parts of books, to be prepared with the most minute critical accuracy. It might be well that one, at least, of these should have been studied under the professor; but the real gain would be in the acquirement, by whatever means, of the habit of thorough and genuine study.

In closing this introductory lecture, I will not attempt to conceal my mistrust of my own sufficiency for the work which lies before me. One whose business it is to be conversant with a heathen literature can hardly fail to be sensible of his need of that purity without which nothing is holy, as well as of that power without which nothing is strong. I feel, too, that there is likely to be much, very much, which will compel me to look to the co-operation and sympathy of those who now hear me. I am not apprehending any collision between rival systems of instruction, but it is plain that when an experiment has to be tried on a considerable scale in one of the principal departments of University study, its success must depend not only on the individual more especially charged with the duty of carrying it out, but on those under whom, among whom, and for whom, he has to labour. And when I think both of the kind and flattering confidence which has placed me here, and also of the many expressions of unexpected interest and regard which I have since received, I am assured that my hopes of consideration and support will not be in vain.

REVIEW OF MUNRO'S 'LUCRETIUS.'[1]

ELEVEN years ago[2] the appearance of an article on Lucretius by Mr. Munro in a classical periodical led us to express a confident hope that the great Latin poet would ere long find an English editor not unworthy to follow in the steps of Lachmann. That hope has at last been fulfilled. In 1860 Mr. Munro gave to the world a new recension of the text of his author, with a critical preface in Latin; and he has now published a revision of that recension, with an English prose translation of the poem at the foot of the page, and a volume of English commentary, consisting of two sets of notes, the one critical, the other explanatory. To say that nothing of the same importance has ever been done for Lucretius in England is unfortunately to say but little. But we shall be greatly surprised if it is not welcomed by the scholars of the Continent as an accession of singular value to Lucretian literature. As regards the text, indeed, Mr. Munro, like Dr. Bernays, must rank as a follower of Lachmann. That great man performed so much that subsequent critics, for a long time to come, are likely to be spoken of simply as disciples in his school. But to find an explanatory commentary on Lucretius equal in importance, in relation to its own period, to Mr. Munro's, we must go back exactly three hundred years, to the edition of Lambinus, in 1564. There is simply nothing in the intervening time, either at home or abroad, which will bear to be named along with it. For that class of

[1] Reprinted from the *Edinburgh Review*, No. ccxlix. July 1865.
[2] *Edinburgh Review*, No. cciii. p. 80.

readers, again, which is interested not so much in the criticism or interpretation of Lucretius as in the Latin language and literature in general, it possesses unusual attractions. No English work within our recollection, of at all a recent date, contains so much of genuine yet not trite learning, so much of ingenious yet sober speculation on questions connected with Latin philology and the mechanism of Latin poetry. Altogether we think we may safely say that it is the most valuable contribution to Latin scholarship made by any Englishman in the present century.

To justify our opinion in detail would require an exhibition of particulars far beyond our own means and opportunities, and not likely, we suspect, to be gratefully received by any large number of our readers. We can only afford to venture a few cursory remarks on the several features of Mr. Munro's edition before we proceed to say something of the author whom he has edited. In speaking of Lucretius, however, we shall have occasion not unfrequently to mention his editor; and even when we do not discuss Mr. Munro's views we shall gladly avail ourselves of his information.

When we speak of the critical part of Mr. Munro's commentary as less important than the explanatory part, we by no means intend any disparagement of the former. No conscientious student of Lucretius can afford to dispense with either of them. The critical notes, so far as we are able to judge of them, are marked by the same accuracy, sobriety, and, to sum up many merits in one word, thoroughness, as the rest of the book. The omissions of Lachmann are supplied, his occasional inaccuracies corrected, his opinions reviewed. There is also a most elaborate introduction of twenty-eight closely-printed pages on the formation of the text, much more

copious than Lachmann's, yet without being in any way redundant, at the same time that it includes a sketch of the history and a discussion of the principles of Latin orthography. Perhaps the point on which labour and ingenuity have been least successfully bestowed is the emendation of corrupt passages. Yet this is no more than may be said of Lachmann's own performances. One whose conceptions of the remedial powers of emendatory criticism have been formed on a study of the brilliant restorations which it has effected in the text of the Greek poets will be surprised to find how many of the conjectures of this 'second Bentley' fail to carry absolute conviction. This inferiority we incline to ascribe not so much to the critic himself as to the subject-matter on which he was engaged. No scholar, so far as we are aware, for the last two centuries at least, has done for any Latin poet what Bentley did for the fragments of Greek poetry, what Porson did for the Greek drama. Bentley himself was far more occupied with Roman authors than with Greek, but his reputation as a restorer of classical text rests mainly on his epistle to Mill and his emendations of Menander. It is not, as his biographer thinks,[1] that 'his knowledge and perception of the latter language were incomparably better than of the former.' No one who reads his notes to Horace can doubt the completeness of his acquaintance with Latin poetry, or his power of suggesting words not unworthy of his author. Nor is it, we think, wholly or principally that he chose to correct passages which did not need correction. Whether, as in Horace, he substitutes a good word for a good, or, as in Manilius, a good word for a bad, the critical reader equally fails to find the substitution which criticism requires, the substitution of a true word for a false. Where

[1] *Monk's Life*, 8vo ed., vol. i. p. 158.

Bentley has failed, no subsequent Latin scholar has succeeded. It would be difficult to name a Greek poet who presents a fairer field for conjectural skill than Catullus, Propertius, and Lucretius himself. There are manuscripts of each enough to stimulate critical ingenuity, not enough to supersede it; and, as might be expected, there are corrupt passages enough in the text of each to make the fortune of any scholar who should be able successfully to restore them. Lachmann has edited all three, and his editions show abundant marks of sagacity and really high ability. Each of the three poets is now made to say a great deal which he probably might have said, in place of a great deal which he never could have said. But conjectures where probability rises into demonstrative certainty—conjectures which, in restoring the words of the author, establish at the same time the truth of the method of conjectural restoration—are comparatively few. Into the causes which lie at the root of this great difference between the results of criticism as applied to Greek and to Latin writers, we do not profess to inquire. Several considerations occur to us which might lead to a solution of the question; but none of them strikes us as so free from possible exception as to make it worth while to state it here. It is enough to note the fact, as we believe it to be, and to point out the importance of bearing it in mind in judging of a new critical edition of a Latin author. One great qualification for conjectural criticism—one in which English scholars as a body greatly surpass the scholars of the Continent—Mr. Munro has in abundant measure, the power of Latin verse composition. Those who know the manly and vigorous translations in hexameter verse which he has contributed to the 'Sabrinæ Corolla' will not question that he could, if he chose, produce whole paragraphs of philosophical

poetry of which Lucretius himself would not have been ashamed. If they think, as we are inclined to think, that in attempting to restore the corrupt passages in his author he has frequently failed to hit on the words which his author is likely to have used, they will conclude, as we are inclined to conclude, that the task of recovering those words is really beyond the reach even of high critical power.

But whatever may be the special impracticability of the text of Latin authors, there are no exceptional circumstances affecting the interpretation of that text. There, at any rate, the battle is to the strong; learning, acuteness, sobriety, and taste will have their full reward. Lucretius may keep the precise words which he used in many cases concealed from the most sagacious observer; the general meaning of his sentences, and the precise signification of that infinitely large proportion of his words which has been transmitted to us in an uncorrupted state, he will surrender to anyone who comes to the quest properly equipped with a knowledge of the Latin language, and especially of the earlier authors, an acquaintance with the Epicurean philosophy, and a relish for ancient poetry. The fault is not his if such a champion has been long in coming. Mr. Munro possesses all, and more than all, the qualifications we have named, and consequently his success is signal and complete. In fact, we know scarcely any editor who has done so much for the interpretation of any author. Very few persons indeed seem to be aware how much is required to make an explanatory commentary on an ancient writer really satisfactory. We might almost say that the knowledge of what has to be done is only to be bought by experience like Mr. Munro's own—the experience not only of editing an author, but of translating him. But, however it is to be attained, there can be no question but that it has been

attained in the work before us. An intelligent reader may peruse page after page of Lucretius with the help of Mr. Munro, and find every inquiry that can reasonably occur to him, even on collateral subjects, satisfied by the commentary, at the same time that many questions which might not have occurred to him are suggested and answered. By way of example, let us take the first few lines of the poem. In the initial words, 'Æneadum genetrix,' the editor points out a contrast between the peculiar relation in which Venus stands to the children of Æneas, and that which she bears to all animate and inanimate nature; he also notices a possible imitation of Ennius and two undoubted imitations by Ovid. He next discusses the orthography of 'genetrix,' adducing various considerations drawn from analogy and authority, and finally deciding for that mode of spelling the word as against the rival 'genitrix.' In verse 2 he explains the force of the epithet 'alma,' showing, by quotations from Macrobius, Plautus, Appuleius and the cosmographer Æthicus, that 'alma Venus' was not only familiar to poets, but had passed into the language of the people. Following Bentley, he notes Lucretius' obligation, in the subsequent description of Venus' influence over the several parts of Nature, to two passages in the 'Hippolytus' of Euripides, and adds *de suo* that both Euripides and Lucretius were indebted to the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite. He comments on the epithet 'labentia,' applied to the stars, and notices, in connexion with it, the attention paid by Lucretius to Cicero's translation of Aratus—a fact of which, in a latter part of his commentary, he produces numerous instances. In verse 3 he speaks of the circumstances under which Lucretius uses the plural of 'terra' oftener than the singular, noticing the curious fact that this use of the plural is almost confined to three cases

out of the five. In verse 4 he illustrates the use of 'concelebrare' from Lucretius himself and from Cicero, and discusses, on poetical grounds, the precise meaning of the word as here employed. In verse 5 he notices that Lucretius is fonder of using 'lumina' in the nominative and accusative than 'lumen.' In the four following lines he comments on the long-drawn stateliness of 'te adventumque tuum,' explains 'dædalus' from a passage of the glossarist Paulus, and notes its different uses in Lucretius, decides that 'rident,' as applied to the sea, refers to its appearance to the eye, not to the ear, and illustrates from Virgil the use of 'placatus' in the sense of relief from storms. This summary of a couple of pages of closely-printed annotation will show how large and comprehensive a scope Mr. Munro gives to the interpreter's duty. There is minute study of his author's peculiarities of usage, however trifling; there is a large acquaintance with other parts of Latin literature, the less known as well as the more known; and there is, besides, a constant recollection that the editor is commenting on a poet, and that inquiries into the signification and usages of words are to be conducted in subordination to the general object of bringing out the meaning which was in that poet's mind. To this part of the commentary also, as well as to the critical part, an introduction is prefixed. In it the chronology of the poet's life, the circumstances of the publication of the poem, the success with which the subject is handled, the character of Lucretius' style, the peculiarities of his versification as compared with that of his predecessors and that of his successors, the opinion entertained of him by his countrymen, are all examined carefully and thoroughly. Of these divisions, the one which strikes us as most novel and most interesting is that which treats of Lucretius' versification, detailing as it does the principal points in

which the Lucretian hexameter differs from the Virgilian. Few critics who are themselves accomplished versifiers would have taken so much trouble in analysing impressions which must have come to them rather by habituation than by distinct apprehension; few who would have had the patience to collect the statistics of metrical composition would have known so well what value to assign to each item in the result.

If any exception is to be taken to the general execution of Mr. Munro's book, it is, we think, that he has scarcely been studious enough of literary conventionalities. His style is lively and diversified, but it is *sui generis*; and we often seem as if we were listening to a Latin commentator through the medium of an English interpreter. Thus in the critical notes (Book IV. v. 594), he notices a conjecture of Bentley's, introduced into the text by Lachmann: '*nimis auricularum. nimi' miraclorum* Lachm. after Bentl.: this is now the third time he has introduced into his text the form *miraclum*, which is not once found in the mss. of Lucr.: whence got the scribe such a hatred of the word?' It is a style which reminds us not a little of that of Bentley's English works; and this, in some respects, is no mean praise, as Bentley's style is vigorous enough. But Bentley wrote before English criticism had acquired a definite style of its own; and his English style suits the character of his critical works, which is polemical, not to say personal. The only thing which he produced in the shape of an English commentary is the commentary appended to his strange edition of Milton; and there he exhibits all the qualities of his ordinary controversial style, railing at the imaginary editor whom he supposes, or pretends to suppose, to have depraved the text of the 'Paradise Lost,' with far less self-restraint than he had showed in his contest with Boyle, and almost as little as he preserved in his brawl with Middleton. Mr. Munro has none of this

acrimonious temper: he speaks occasionally with just severity of the negligence of some of his predecessors, and considerately extenuates the Bentleian atrocities of censure in which Lachmann not unfrequently indulged; but he is himself perfectly good-humoured and genial, and his quaintnesses of expression commonly produce the effect of a pleasant freshness and individuality. On the whole, however, we can scarcely doubt that now that criticism on the classics is passing out of the hands of Latinists and becoming a branch of English literature, it ought to express itself as far as possible after the manner of English literary precedents; that an editor of the ancient classics ought to aim at a style as classical as that of the historian of the 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,' to study the critical manner of a writer like Mr. Hallam, and even at times to dress himself by the glass of Lord Macaulay. The same individuality appears even in the mechanical part of Mr. Munro's commentary. He prints his Latin with that paucity of stops which has now become almost the established fashion among scholars; and he apparently thinks that parity of reasoning requires him to introduce the same custom into English. Thus we have: 'By *pecudes ferae* Varro means tame animals or *pecudes* found in a wild state, viz. sheep goats swine bulls asses horses; Columella goats deer boars, which though wild may yet be kept in herds on an estate;' and again, 'Tantalus Tityos Sisyphus, the daughters of Danaus, are but types of people tormented here by various lusts and passions: Tartarus too Cerberus the furies have no existence; but are pictures of the various punishments of crime in this world.' We are not sure, indeed, that this parsimonious punctuation is not becoming a point of honour among Cambridge scholars; at least we fancy we have noticed symptoms of the same thing in other works by eminent members of that University which have

appeared within the last few months. 'Yet we cannot say that we like the fashion;' 'they will say it is Persian attire; but let it be changed.' As we are commenting on these things, we may as well notice also that Mr. Munro is as sparing of capital letters as of stops, printing for instance 'the birth-favouring breath of favonius,' 'Ritschl pref. to trinummus,' and that in referring to notes of other editors on other authors, he says, 'Oudendorp to Lucan x 491,' which reads rather like a bald version of the Latin 'ad.' We are ashamed to dwell on these things, which in relation to so great a performance as Mr. Munro's are mere spots in the sun; but it appears to us that all such peculiarities give a needlessly technical and repellant character to the work, and we regret them accordingly. We confess that we have ourselves not unfrequently felt provoked by the sciolism which dogmatises about scholarship on the strength of a grammar-school knowledge of Latin and Greek, and writes about Cicero as familiarly as it would about Lord Derby, and have been tempted to wish that the mystery of the craft were locked up in algebraic symbols; but we cannot seriously doubt that on the whole it is fortunate for classical scholarship that it admits of being exhibited in a form intelligible to men of ordinary culture, and that it is worth while to make an occasional sacrifice which is not absolutely fatal to accuracy in order to prevent the reader from being startled by strange nomenclatures and unfamiliar appearances.

But we must leave the editor and speak of the author. Of the translator we hope to say a few words before we conclude our notice.

The poem of Lucretius is one of those which in modern times at least have had many admirers, but comparatively few readers. Of the impression which it made on its own generation and generations near its own we know but

little. Cicero, who, according to a tradition mentioned by Jerome, edited it after the author's death, said something about it in a letter to his brother; but what that something was, critics are not agreed. Either it had many flashes of genius, yet much art beside; or many flashes of genius, but not much art; or not many flashes of genius, but much art. Lachmann takes one view of Cicero's words, Mr. Munro another; they differ about the meaning of the word which we have rendered genius, nor are they agreed what is meant by art. Ovid, borrowing the poet's own words, says that the poem will only perish on the day which brings the world to an end. Statius talks of his learning, and of his lofty inspiration: but the strongest testimony to his power is to be found in the influence which he exercised on Virgil, who, though he never mentions him explicitly, imitates him not only throughout the 'Georgics,' but in not a few passages of the 'Æneid,' and even of the 'Eclogues.' On the whole, however, the conclusion of one of his most enthusiastic modern admirers, Professor Sellar of Edinburgh,[1] appears to be that he did not count among his own countrymen for as much as he is really worth. Since the revival of letters, the eulogies bestowed upon him have been numerous and emphatic. Joseph Warton, following an ingenious analogy in use among Oriental critics, declares that as a descriptive poet he is more than a painter—he is a sculptor. Byron, in a petulant and not very discriminating passage, asserts that his poem, as mere poetry, is the first of Latin poems. These and similar eulogies, however, would be more valuable if they were accompanied with evidences that the eulogists had studied the whole poem, and were not merely acquainted with the occasional brilliant passages—perhaps seven hundred lines

[1] *Roman Poets of the Republic*, p. 313.

out of as many thousand—with which all lovers of Latin poetry are familiar. As a matter of fact, Professor Sellar is almost the only modern writer, not being himself an editor of Lucretius, who, in praising the author's genius, gives proof that he has really surmounted the difficulties of the work in which that genius is exhibited. And though we think that Mr. Sellar has done good service to Latin literature in the chapters which he has devoted to Lucretius, no less than in the rest of his book, we question whether, even after his and Mr. Munro's labours, this great poet is likely to become in any sense popular among readers of Latin. There are, and always will be, two drawbacks to his general attractiveness: first and foremost, the nature of his poem, as an exposition of the Epicurean system; secondly, and in a less degree, the imperfection of his language and rhythm, as compared with the more finished specimens of Augustan poetry.

Didactic poetry is in fact an anachronism. Verse naturally preceded prose as a form of composition; and so at first everything which was thought of sufficient dignity to be treated at all was treated in verse. When Hesiod wished to discourse on farming operations, and lucky and unlucky days, he naturally chose verse for his vehicle. And though prose had been employed for philosophical writing before the time of Xenophanes and Empedocles, it was perhaps not unnatural that they, living when the echoes of Orphic poetry had hardly died out, and themselves taking an ideal and enthusiastic view of nature rather than one based on experience and observation, should throw their doctrines into a poetical form. But as soon as the different types of composition came to be properly understood and discriminated, the occupation of the didactic poet was really gone. However great his powers might be, the result of his labours could only furnish one more

instance of genius misapplied. The Greeks seem to have felt this instinctively: their great poets did not aspire to tread in the steps of Hesiod; and it was only when the creative spirit of Greek literature had decayed, and the faculty of clever imitation was rising up in its place, that writers like Nicander and Aratus began to come to the front among their contemporaries. The literary development of Rome followed the type of Alexandria rather than that of Greek proper; and so it was natural that Roman writers should mistake where their models had mistaken.

But in their case the mistake was a most serious one. It mattered little whether the dregs of the Greek intellect were poured into new or into old bottles; but 'the first sprightly runnings' of Roman genius could not but suffer from being allowed to flow into an improper receptacle. This misdirection of power has operated in different ways to the injury of Lucretius and Virgil. The 'Nature of Things' is didactic, but much of it is scarcely poetry. The 'Georgics' are poetry, but much of them is scarcely didactic. Yet a student of philosophy, coming to Lucretius for instruction about the Epicurean system, will probably regret that the exposition is not more strictly methodical, and the language chosen in all cases with a view to philosophical significance rather than to poetical beauty or metrical convenience; while a lover of poetry will find much in the 'Georgics' which he is glad to pass over lightly as not in any true sense poetical, though he may well afford a transient feeling of admiration for that marvellous dexterity, that delicate artistic susceptibility, which even in precepts about placing stones and broken pots at the roots of vines, and directions for the construction of bee-hives, can discover an occasion for graceful expression and rhythmical felicity.

The poem of Lucretius then fails, as in our judgment

all didactic poetry must fail, because it is really an attempt to combine incompatibilities. It was a choice between Scylla and Charybdis; and if he had escaped the monster he must have been drawn into the whirlpool. But we suspect his readers would have been better pleased if he had avoided the grim shape and allowed himself to be carried off by the vertiginous eddy. They would have condoned what is merely vague and uncertain, if he would have spared them what is actually repulsive. As it is, they are expected to face long arguments proving that everything is either Body or Void, that the Homœomery of Anaxagoras is a baseless theory, and that the totality of things is infinite, and their courage fails them. We are willing to concede to Mr. Munro that any other system of the universe would have been equally uninviting as the subject of a poem. We have not a word to say for the Stoics, 'with their one wretched world, their monotonous fire, their method of destroying and creating anew their world.' If we question the poetical success of Lucretius, it is not in the interest of 'the leaden dulness and tedious obscurity of the Stoic Manilius.' Perhaps even if we had heard the discourse which the Goddess Justice addressed to Parmenides, when the coursers of thought brought him to the gates of day and night, or listened to Empedocles, as he accomplished his expiation for the murder which he had committed in the divine fore-time, our attention might occasionally have flagged a little. It is in a spirit of strict impartiality towards the rival Greek systems that we venture to deny that any of them could advantageously have been made the subject of a didactic poem, properly so called. We do not question that the contemplation of nature inspired Greek philosophy—the Epicurean school, if Mr. Munro wishes, in an unusual degree—with grand and sublime conceptions,

appealing powerfully to the imagination, and as such well calculated to be embodied in poetry. But to admit this is very different from admitting that a thorough exposition of any philosophical system is possible in any poetry which deserves the name. Imagination may direct the man of science to conclusions, but the links between them and truths already ascertained must be supplied by reasoning. Whether these intermediate steps could possibly be represented in an imaginative form we do not pretend to say; we only maintain that didactic poets, as a matter of fact, do not so represent them. Certainly Lucretius does not; he has reasoned out his argument, and he gives friend and foe the benefit of the process. How does he combat objections to the doctrine that atoms do not move downwards in straight lines? We will give his words in Mr. Munro's version, which being in prose will show better the really prosaic character of the argument:—

But if haply anyone believes that heavier bodies, as they are carried more quickly sheer through space, can fall from above on the lighter, and so beget blows able to produce begetting motions, he goes most widely astray from true reason. For whenever bodies fall through water and thin air, they must quicken their descents in proportion to their weights, because the body of water and subtle nature of air cannot retard everything in equal degree, but more readily give way, overpowered by the heavier: on the other hand, empty void cannot offer resistance to anything in any direction at any time, but must, as its nature craves, continually give way; and for this reason all things must be moved and borne along with equal velocity though of equal weights through the unresisting void.

It is true that this severity of reasoning is not unfrequently relieved by illustrations longer or shorter, and that these illustrations, regarded separately, may give

pleasure to the reader who reads for pleasure. In the next page the same doctrine, that there must be deviations from the straight line of motion, is enforced by an illustration from horses, which, when the barrier of the racecourse is thrown open, cannot start forth as instantaneously as they wish: a page or two further on another part of the general argument gives occasion to the well-known descriptions of sheep seen at a distance and looking like a white spot on a hill, though really in motion, and of armies in the act of executing movements, yet appearing from a particular point of view to be at rest. Even in the original of the passage which we have just extracted, there are one or two slight things which may remind the reader that he is reading poetry. There is a rhythmical effect in the line, 'sed citius cedunt gravioribus exsuperata,' in the alliteration in the former part, and in the polysyllabic weight of the latter, which seconds the thought intended to be conveyed; while the expression 'inane quietum' affects the imagination more than Mr. Munro's 'unresisting void'—the one indicating rather the nature of the void in itself, the other, its relation to the bodies which move through it. Yet we are much mistaken if these occasional flashes of imagination, though quite sufficient to prove the writer to be a poet, will be sufficient to make his argument attractive to any reader who is not already interested in the argument for its own sake. No doubt to Lucretius himself the interest of his subject was one and indivisible. It kindled his whole nature, imagination, heart, intellect, alike. He enters as keenly into the task of proving that the mind 'must consist of bodies exceedingly small, smooth, and round,' as into that of singing the triumphant progress of his master through the universe; because he knows that if he were to fail in demonstrating the former, the latter would be

mere windy declamation. But though this does much to make the poet the interesting figure that he is, it does not make his poem readable. Even if it were true that Epicureanism made him a poet, it would still be true that Epicureanism prevented him from turning his poetical faculty to account. It was Apollo who gave Cassandra the power of prophecy; but it was Apollo who provided that no one should pay attention to what she said.

But the unattractiveness of Lucretius' poem is not due solely to its inexorably didactic character. Even if he had sacrificed the claims of scientific exposition to those of poetical embellishment, with as little compunction as Virgil has done, he would still be less popular than Virgil, because he has not Virgil's style. Of late years, indeed, there has been a tendency among certain critics to deny that Virgil has any poetical advantage over Lucretius—any literary superiority which is not countervailed by literary superiority of another kind. We suspect ourselves that this creed is chiefly confined to those who study the poem of Lucretius in extracts. They dwell on isolated passages, call attention to the boldness of the imagery and the solemn march of the versification, and ask whether there is not something there beyond what the art of Virgil can produce. But the question between the 'Nature of Things' and the 'Georgics' is a question not about isolated passages, but about the entire contexture of the two poems. We are not speaking of the proportion of purely didactic (and therefore, as we have been contending, unpoetical) matter in each; that we have already considered. We speak of the language and the metre in which Lucretius and Virgil respectively clothe what they have to say, whether didactic or otherwise. Comparing them from this point of view, we find the elder bard apt to be prolix and incondite in diction and monotonous in versification,

where the language of the younger is terse and elegant, and his rhythm varied and effective. This is merely tantamount to saying that Lucretius wrote before the style and cadence of Latin poetry had been cultivated to perfection. Mr. Munro is too good a composer himself to contend that his author is to be compared to Virgil in power of handling the hexameter. 'It must not be questioned,' he says candidly, 'that in the construction of single verses, and still more in the rhythmical movement which he impresses on a whole passage, Lucretius is a far less careful and skilled artist than Virgil.' Yet he does not admit as explicitly as we could wish that the Augustan school of poetry was an advance on that which preceded it. After conceding that the Augustan writers 'obtained the unanimous suffrages of the best critics of the empire, at the head of whom stood Quintilian,' he goes on to remark that 'the reaction in favour of the older literature seems to have been headed by unskilful and too zealous leaders, and thus to have exposed itself to the shafts of satire:' thus implying, if we understand him correctly, that more judicious generalship might have changed the fortune of the day. To us, we confess, it appears that the difference between Lucretius and Catullus on the one hand, and Virgil and Horace on the other, is a difference not so much between individuals as between two periods of the poetical development of the national mind—between immaturity and maturity. It is true that the maturity lasted but a very short time—that it soon became over-ripeness. But the shortness of its duration does not make it less a real fact, or abate its superiority to the earlier and imperfect stage. That superiority is shown in nothing more than in uniformity and equality of workmanship. By uniformity we do not mean monotonous sameness, but sustained excellence. It

is this that writers of an immature period, like Lucretius, especially lack. As Miss Edgeworth says of the hospitable preparations at an Irish mansion, everything there is sumptuous and unfinished. 'You have a marble chimney-piece fixed to a bare wall. One of Lucretius' most justly admired lines is that which characterises the two great autumnal winds, 'Altitonans Volturnus et Auster fulmine pollens.' How many of those who quote it remember the line which immediately precedes it, 'Inde aliæ tempestates ventique sequuntur'? If the one has a grandeur hardly to be found in Virgil, the other has a triviality which would suit Lilly or Dean Aldrich. And it is needless to say that the number of lines of the latter stamp very greatly exceeds the number of lines of the former. To a certain extent this may be imputed to the unfinished state of the poem; but not, we think, wholly. The imperfection we complain of is discernible in Catullus' 'Peleus and Thetis,' though in that case there is nothing in the nature of the subject to force it into such glaring prominence. In Lucretius and Catullus alike we see that kind of garrulity which is delightful in Homer, but in almost every other poet is more or less tedious and ungraceful—the utterance of a child impeding the thoughts of the growing or grown man. Lachmann may call it 'lactea ubertas;' but to our taste it savours too much of the bread and milk of the nursery. The child has realised the fact that the fields are green and the sand yellow, that the sea can carry ships, and that cattle part the hoof, and it is anxious to proclaim its discovery to all the world. We are interested in observing the development of its intelligence, but after a certain time we are tempted to bid it hush, and reserve our attention for communications more absolutely novel.

If, however, we may regard Lucretius not as a finished

artist, but as the writer of a period when poetical art was immature, we are quite ready and desirous to do justice to his extraordinary powers. Whether any altogether definite notion of the poet can be formed from his poem we are not sure. Those who have attempted such a realising process have obtained somewhat different results. Mr. De Quincey embraces eagerly the story that the 'Nature of Things' was written in the intervals of delirium, or, as he prefers to put it, in a delirious state; he is sure that he could have guessed as much from the poem, which is all excitement and no lull, at the same time that he admires the poet as the first of demoniacs. Professor Sellar will not allow that even lucid intervals could have produced the poem, and pronounces the poet to be not only more characteristically Roman than any Latin writer except Tacitus, but to be equalled in depth of human sympathy and pathos by Homer alone among the ancients, while in other respects he reminds his critic of Spinoza, Pascal, and Milton. But, at any rate, we may carry away impressions which, whether capable or not of being combined into an intelligible whole, regarded singly are full of depth, beauty, and truth. That fear of death for which men, till the truth has made them free, are 'all their lifetime subject to bondage,' has never been represented with more terrible reality than in the lines near the beginning of the Third Book of the poem:—

> Et metus ille foras præceps Acheruntis agendus,
> Funditus humanam qui vitam turbat ab imo,
> Omnia suffundens mortis nigrore, neque ullam
> Esse voluptatem liquidam puramque relinquit.

What can be more striking in expression and in solemn cadence than his picture of the degradation entailed by violent and irregular passion?—

Adde quod absumunt vires pereuntque labore;
Adde quod alterius sub nutu degitur ætas;
Labitur interea res et Babylonica fiunt,
Languent officia atque ægrotat fama vacillans.

Professor Sellar speaks justly of the power with which the religious effect of the procession of the 'Great Goddess' Cybele is impressed on the imagination:—

Ergo cum primum magnas invecta per urbes
Munificat tacita mortales muta salute.

The powerlessness of the healing art in the presence of a mysterious pestilence is painted to the life in four words:—

Mussabat tacito medicina timore.

We seem to see science, as impersonated by the physician, generally so fertile in suggestion and so fluent in explanation, now reduced to inarticulate muttering. Such lines as these are like the tolling of a bell; continued for a long time they would be oppressive and fatiguing; listened to at intervals, for a few minutes together, they affect us powerfully. But there are not wanting longer passages which can be perused with pleasure, the diffuseness of expression and the stately uniformity of cadence answering to feelings which the author suggests and the reader is glad to indulge. Such is the famous picture of the fiend Superstition brooding over mankind, and the not less famous Æschylean study that follows, the sacrifice of Iphigenia. Such is the narration of the gradual origin of society which occupies the latter half of the Fifth Book—a long reach of disquisition, which, if occasionally dry and barren, is generally rich and luxuriant. Such, above all (for we need not run through the enumeration of beauties

which may be found in books of Latin extracts),[1] are the two magnificent passages which respectively conclude the Second and Third Books—the one treating of the decay of the world, the other containing an expostulation with man on the subject of the fear of death. The first, though comparatively simple and unadorned, has a deep and impressive melancholy to which we should find it difficult to name a parallel. The second is much longer and considerably more varied. There is elaborate reasoning, there is indignant remonstrance, addressed by Nature herself to her recusant child, there is a muster-roll of all the illustrious men who have submitted to death, there is a bitterly sarcastic contrast of their greatness with the contemptible littleness of the ordinary mortal who quarrels with his doom. The effect of the whole recalls to us those grand words in which Tacitus sums up the characteristics of a day of mourning, 'modo per silentium vastus, modo ploratibus inquies,' an alternation of dreary desolation with passionate sorrow.

As might be expected, Lucretius has not found many translators. Single books or detached passages have been occasionally attempted; but the only one of these fugitive writers who need be mentioned is Dryden, who has left us some specimens of harmonious reasoning, and coarse though vigorous description. Of complete translations of the poem there have been six, including that now before us, three in verse and three in prose. Creech's (1682), in heroic couplets, had a great reputation in its day, and is not without merit; but though there is some masculine

[1] One such book, which we may recommend in passing to our readers, has lately been published by Mr. St. John Thackeray, of Eton, under the title of *Anthologia Latina*. It contains selections from Latin Poets, ranging from Nævius to Claudian, and a few illustrative notes in Latin. The passages are well chosen, and the appearance of the book is exceedingly pretty, reminding us of such works as Mr. Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*.

writing in it, there is little grace or beauty, and a good deal of triviality and vulgarity. Good's (1805–7) is an attempt to make Lucretius speak in the blank verse of Thomson and Akenside, the result being not a little feeble verbiage and commonplace rhetoric, though the version, as a whole, may be called tolerable. Busby's 'Didascalic Poem' (1813), as he chose to call it, which might be similarly characterised as an attempt to make Lucretius talk like Dr. Darwin, was made the subject of some not undeserved ridicule by our southern contemporary,[1] and is still preserved in memory by the 'Architectural Atoms' of the 'Rejected Addresses.' The prose versions are by an anonymous author in the middle of the last century, by Mr. Watson in Bohn's Classical Library, and by Mr. Munro. The first we have seen, but have not within call, and do not care to disinter; the second is a respectable specimen of its class, and might satisfy the ordinary reader if there were none better. The excellence of Mr. Munro's is the same as that which we have mentioned as the excellence of his commentary—its great carefulness and exactness. Perhaps it may occasionally disappoint those who, knowing Lucretius only in select passages, take up the translation in order to see how some favourite poetical effect in the original is reproduced in English. Mr. Munro has seen rightly that a translator of Lucretius is the last who ought to sacrifice the whole to the parts; that the poem ought really to be translated in the same spirit as if it were a formal philosophical treatise, a particular nomenclature being preserved throughout, and words which would suit the requirements of this or that passage being unsparingly rejected if on consideration they should appear unsuited for doing duty elsewhere.

[1] *Quarterly Review*, vol. xi. pp. 88-103.

He has laboured not for the many but for the few; and the few, we feel assured, will thank him. Meanwhile, we will venture to compare him and his brother translators in a single short passage, taken from that splendid peroration of the Third Book, to which we adverted a page or two back, rather for the sake of our readers, who may desire a little criticism in detail after so much general disquisition, than for the sake of the new translator, whose work, as we have just intimated, would be judged unfairly if judged in this way. We select this particular passage, not merely for its force and impressiveness, but because it enables us to give a specimen of Dryden's version. We may say, in passing, that we will not trouble our readers with Dr. Busby, who, though not, as in other passages, outrageously absurd, is feeble and ungrammatical:—

(Book iii. vv. 1045 *et seq.*)

Tu vero dubitabis et indignabere obire?
Mortua cui vita est prope jam vivo atque videnti,
Qui somno partem majorem conteris ævi,
Et vigilans stertis nec somnia cernere cessas,
Sollicitamque geris cassa formidine mentem,
Nec reperire potis quid sit tibi sæpe mali, cum
Ebrius urgeris multis miser undique curis,
Atque animi incerto fluitans errore vagaris.

CREECH.

Then how darest thou repine to die, and grieve,
Thou meaner soul, thou dead e'en whilst alive,
That sleep'st and dream'st the most of life away?
Thy night is full as rational as thy day:
Still vexed with cares, who never understood
The principles of ill nor use of good,
Nor whence thy cares proceed, but reel'st about
In vain unsettled thoughts, condemned to doubt.

DRYDEN.

And thou, dost thou disdain to yield thy breath,
Whose very life is little more than death?
More than one half by lazy sleep possest,
And when awake, thy soul but nods at best,
Day dreams and sickly thoughts revolving in thy breast.
Eternal troubles haunt thy anxious mind,
Whose cause and cure thou never hopest to find,
But still uncertain, with thyself at strife,
Thou wanderest in the labyrinth of life.

GOOD.

And dost thou murmur, and indignant die,
Whose life, while living, scarcely death exceeds?
Thou, who in sleep devourest half thy days,
And, e'en awake, who snorest, dreaming still,
And torturing all thy mind with vain alarms?
Thou, who lamentest oft, unknowing why,
Urged on, with fear intoxicated deep,
And in a maze of mental errors lost?

WATSON.

Wilt thou then hesitate and grudge to die, in whom, even while living and seeing, life is almost dead? thou, who wastest the greater part of existence in sleep, and snorest waking, nor ceasest to see dreams, and bearest a mind disturbed with empty terror; nor canst thou frequently discover what evil affects thee, when, stupified and wretched, thou art oppressed with numerous cares on all sides, and, fluctuating with uncertain thought, wanderest in error?

MUNRO.

Wilt thou then hesitate and think it a hardship to die? thou for whom life is well nigh dead while yet thou livest and seest the light, who wastest the greater part of thy time in sleep, and snorest wide awake, and ceasest not to see visions, and hast a mind troubled with groundless terror, and canst not

discover often what it is that ails thee, when, besotted man, thou art sore pressed on all sides with a multitude of cares, and goest astray tumbling in a maze of mental error.

Our readers will see that Creech is not to be despised: he is not quite grammatical, but he is vigorous, and it is no fault of his that he has been eclipsed by Dryden. That great man is, as usual, easy and masterly. Of the last two lines of his original we think he might have made more than he has done. The metaphor, as we understand it, is not from a man wandering in a labyrinth, but from a ship without a pilot, which reels and staggers through the water, pressed and tossed by billows on all sides. Virgil, at any rate, that diligent student of the language of Lucretius, has borrowed the word 'fluitare' for the motion of Æneas' ship when deprived of her helmsman. Good is nearly valueless. Blank verse ought to be almost as close as prose, and he is far from close, while what he substitutes is no compensation for what he takes away. 'Indignant die' is not the same thing as 'indignabere obire.' 'Scarcely death exceeds' is a wretched dilution of 'mortua est prope.' 'Dreaming still and torturing all thy mind' represents as the same state two phrases of unsoundness which had better have been kept distinct. In the next line lamenting is substituted for being ill at ease. 'Urged on' is not 'urgeris;' and neither 'multis' nor 'undique' is given. Mr. Watson is very tolerable, though less good than Mr. Munro. 'Wastest,' by which both of them render 'conteris,' would have been a better equivalent for a less strong word, like 'teris.' We should prefer 'wearest away,' not as in itself more graphic than 'wastest,' but as less hackneyed, and so preserving its original outline more clearly. 'Geris,' which Mr. Watson renders 'bearest,' Mr. Munro extenuates into 'hast.' Perhaps he is right, as Lucretius constantly uses

'gerere' when he means no more than 'habere.' If we had only this passage to think of, we should be inclined to suggest 'bearest about with thee.' 'Stupefied and wretched' couples two words which Lucretius has not coupled. There is force in the order of the Latin: 'ebrius,' standing at the head of the line, gives the tone to the whole; 'miser' is little more than a qualifying adverb. For the rest, 'stupefied' seems to us rather better than 'besotted,' which has come to be appropriated to extreme folly, with scarcely a notion of bewilderment or unsteadiness. 'Staggering as from drink,' or 'drunken as with wine' would, we think, give the figure better. In the last line, whether we read 'animi' or 'animo,' we do not like Mr. Munro's 'mental error,' which turns into conventional prose what in Lucretius is graphic and poetical.

We must conclude. We doubt, as we have already intimated, whether even Mr. Munro's labours will make Lucretius popular, in that limited sense in which any Latin classic can be made popular. But we have no sort of doubt that his book will tell powerfully on English scholarship, and that English students of Latin literature will gladly resort to him for much which could not have been obtained from any English source, and something perhaps which even Germany might have failed to supply.

THE STYLE OF LUCRETIUS AND CATULLUS AS COMPARED WITH THAT OF THE AUGUSTAN POETS.[1]

Two years ago I wrote a review of the edition of Lucretius recently published by my friend Mr. Munro.[2] In the course of my criticism I ventured to protest against an opinion, of which I thought I saw some traces in one of the editor's Introductions, that the poets of the last age of the Roman Commonwealth could fairly be compared in point of art with their successors of the Augustan period. His masterly work has since reached a second edition: and in it he has done me the honour to make an answer to my remarks. It appears that there is a real question at issue between us; and I am glad to have had it put into a tangible shape for discussion, and have been led to reconsider my reasons for adopting a view which I still believe to be the true one.

Perhaps it will be best for me to commence what I have to say by quoting Mr. Munro's answer nearly *in extenso*.

After observing that I find not only the rhythm, but the style and language of his author to be immature, prolix, incondite, he goes on:[3] 'That Lucretius is surpassed by Virgil in the rhythm and technical excellence of his verse it would be foolish to deny; but to me his language appears inferior in no sense in which Cicero or

[1] This lecture, which was delivered at Oxford, March 9, 1867, is reprinted, together with the Appendix, from the edition published in that year.

[2] See preceding Article.

[3] Vol. i. pp. 316, 317.

Cæsar may not be said to be inferior to Livy or Seneca. And in this belief I am glad to be confirmed by the Lambins and Scaligers of the sixteenth, the Goethes and Lachmanns of the nineteenth century. For Lucretius' sake I am not sorry to find Catullus put by his side and declared to be as much below Horace as Lucretius is below Virgil. Though Catullus' heroic poem was, I believe, one of his latest, I do not look on it or his elegiacs as the happiest specimens of his genius; but his lyrics, to my taste, are perfect gems, unequalled in Latin, unsurpassed in Greek poetry. Horace, when he wrote his epodes and earlier odes, was probably older than Catullus was when he died. Yet in the metres common to them both, in the iambic for instance and the glyconic, who will say that the former, with all his labour and care, has obtained the same mastery over them which Catullus displays, who would seem to have thrown them off at once without effort according as the *odi* or the *amo* constrained him at the moment to write? His language is as undefiled a well of Latin as that of Plautus, and is withal the very quintessence of poetry. To return to Lucretius, the reviewer finds about seven hundred brilliant lines in the whole poem: I find at least that number in the fifth book alone; and in these verses the highest efforts of his genius are to be sought for, not in the second or third book, impressive though they may be.' Mr. Munro then controverts an opinion which I am not at present concerned to vindicate, paralleling the work of Lucretius with the didactic compositions of the Alexandrian school, and ends by saying that even in those portions of the poem which at first may be somewhat dry and repelling, he, for one, discovers neither prolixity nor childishness, but rather, with Lachmann, a terse and manly simplicity.

What I have to prove, then, against my friendly antagonist is briefly this: that Lucretius is inferior to Virgil not only in the technical structure of his versification, but in style, and generally in poetical art; and similarly that Catullus, as a complete and finished poet, is inferior to Horace. I say nothing about the native genius of each writer: I only speak of the actual results attained by each, my point being to characterise them, not as individuals, but rather as representatives of a period. This was the proposition laid down in the article of which I have spoken; and this it is which I understand my friend to traverse.

I do not feel sure at the outset what use I ought to make of the admission that Virgil is superior to his predecessor in the management of the hexameter. The more I think of it, the less clear I feel how much such a concession involves. It is very hard, in analysing a poet, to say what portion of the effect produced by his verses is owing to the rhythm and what to the language. The two, in fact, are parts of one living organisation, acting and reacting on each other. It is possible, no doubt, to think of words which, as words, would give pleasure to readers of poetry, but which, either from their collocation or perhaps in themselves, offend against our sense of rhythm; but in practice we generally find that those writers who are admired most for their choice of words are admired also in the same proportion for the rhythmical use which they make of their words. So it is possible to break up the order of the words in a passage from a poem, and re-arrange them so that they shall make no metre at all; but it does not follow from this that they could be recombined into a different metrical form, so that, while the versification should give us an increase or a diminution of pleasure, the language should affect us in

the same way as before. No amount of mere metrical manipulation, though the artist were Virgil himself, could transform a paragraph of Lucretius into a paragraph of Virgil. Lucretius' solemn and uniform cadences suit the structure of his sentences: to set his language to another tune, you must recompose it and make it another language. The structure of the sentence, again, and the choice of words naturally go hand in hand, and both are comprehended under the one term 'style.' Now it is in this matter of style that, as I have said, I claim the superiority for Virgil; and as it seems to me to be inseparably connected with his acknowledged metrical success, I find it hard to discuss the one without taking advantage of the admission made about the other. As, however, Mr. Munro, I presume, either does not recognise the connection, or, recognising it, thinks it possible that the same causes which operate favourably on style may operate less favourably on metre, or *vice versâ*, I must endeavour to isolate the question of style, and discuss the merits of Lucretius with reference to that; and that only.

I think it not impossible that a partial key to the difference between Mr. Munro's view and mine is to be found in the first sentence which I have quoted from him. He there says that to him the language of Lucretius appears inferior to that of Virgil in no sense in which Cicero or Cæsar may not be said to be inferior to Livy or Seneca. Holding the views which I do about the various stages of progress and decay in prose and poetical composition at Rome, I am a little surprised at the indiscriminate way in which, as it appears to me, these names are put together. Two parallels are I suppose intended, the one of the two historians, the other of the two philosophical writers; but surely the width of the interval is an important element in the case, and the interval

between Cicero and Seneca, as writers of prose, is far wider than that between Cæsar and Livy. Let that pass, however; it may have been hastily said; it may have been deliberately intended as a forcible way of expressing the writer's conviction that the real decline of Roman style is to be dated, not from the post-Augustan, but from the Augustan era; that the so-called golden age was in fact only silver-gilt. But what I wish to call attention to is the intimation which the words seem to contain, that poets and prose writers are to be judged by the same standard. Lucretius is placed on a footing with Cicero; and it is argued in effect that because the general consent of sound criticism prefers the style of the latter to that of the prose writers who have followed him, it must be an unhealthy fastidiousness which would not accord to the former in his own department a similar preference. Here it is precisely that I am anxious to join issue. I am disposed to think that a large portion of Lucretius' poem, if stripped of metre, might pass muster among the writings of Cicero. In other words, I believe it could easily be reduced into clear, vigorous, rhetorical prose, of a somewhat redundant and ornate character. It is sound, pure, idiomatic Latin; but I venture to doubt whether, except occasionally, it is poetry. That is the point at issue: I do not dispute the goodness of the language; what I say is, that it is good enough for a prose writer, not good enough for a great poet. As I have remarked elsewhere, I know no better distinction between prose and poetry than that laid down by Coleridge as reported in his 'Table Talk,' though at first sight it is apt to appear meagre and unsatisfying enough. 'Prose is words in their right places; poetry, the best words in their right places.' I will not enlarge on this here; an excellent comment on it, by Coleridge himself, may be found in the early chapters of the second

volume of his 'Biographia,' where he combats Wordsworth's celebrated thesis, that the language of poetry is essentially the same with that of prose. What I feel in reading Lucretius then, is that his language in general does not rise beyond a prose level; he has striking poetical images, more striking, it may be, considered separately, than most of those which are to be found in Virgil, but they are in a prose setting; his enthusiasm, always austere and genuine, is at times lofty and imaginative, but its effect is apt to be deadened by the multitude of words in which it is conveyed. This redundance is not necessarily a vice in prose, where the language is less choice, and every word is not expected to stick in the memory. But in verse it is the water which dilutes the wine—the ivy which strangles the tree round which it clings—the earth which makes the lump of ore larger, but which must be removed by the furnace before the pure metal can be obtained.

And now let me justify what I have said by analysing a passage or two from the 'De Rerum Natura' itself. It is the Fifth Book which Mr. Munro chooses to make the battle-field; and to the Fifth Book accordingly my extracts shall be confined.

I take the opening lines. They are, I think, a fair specimen of Lucretius' manner, and they are to be found in at least one of the works which profess to collect the choicer passages of Roman poetry:—

> Quis potis est dignum pollenti pectore carmen
> Condere, pro rerum maiestate hisque repertis?
> Quisve valet verbis tantum, qui fingere laudes
> Pro meritis eius possit, qui talia nobis
> Pectore parta suo quaesitaque praemia liquit?
> Nemo, ut opinor, erit mortali corpore cretus.
> Nam si, ut ipsa petit maiestas cognita rerum,
> Dicendum est, Deus ille fuit, Deus, inclyte Memmi,
> Qui princeps vitae rationem invenit eam, quae

Nunc appellatur sapientia; quique per artem
Fluctibus e tantis vitam tantisque tenebris
In tam tranquillo et tam clara luce locavit.

The chief thing, I think, which strikes us in considering these lines is their argumentative character. 'Who can praise Epicurus worthily? no mortal, for Epicurus himself was more than a mortal, as the benefits he conferred on humanity show.' I cannot help thinking that this savours rather of poetical rhetoric than of poetry; it is reasoning for reasoning's sake, where the forms of reasoning at any rate were not called for. Virgil would have conveyed the thought that the godlike sage needed a god to praise him in a very different way. I do not say that this argues an inferiority in poetical temperament, but I say that it argues an inferiority in art. It is the dialectician intruding into the poet's province, just as in Plautus, and in the fragments of the early writers, the grammarian is sometimes mixed up with the dramatist or the satirist; and it appears to me to be symptomatic of a time when poetry is still immature. Examining the lines in detail, I continue to find the same features. There is a sameness in the repetition of 'pectore,' of 'rerum maiestate' and 'maiestas rerum,' of 'pro maiestate' and 'pro meritis.' The two first lines are repeated in the three that follow, yet little seems to be gained by thus presenting the thought in a twofold form. 'Mortali corpore cretus' is a piece of Lucretian commonplace, a formula which occurs from time to time in the poem, just like the epic commonplaces which abound in Homer, and do not displease us in him, because they are felt to be characteristic of an early poet. And what can be said of 'rationem vitae eam quae nunc appellatur sapientia,' but that it is prose pure and simple, where the words must wonder how, being as they are,

they ever got into metrical order? On the other side, all that can be alleged as marks of high poetical art are the rapturous burst 'Deus ille fuit, Deus,' a pearl which Virgil has judiciously transferred to his own treasury, and the two last lines, though even there one may question whether the language might not have been refined a little more. Some may wish to add the words 'carmen condere;' but Mr. Munro himself has shown that the expression was an ordinary one at the time when Lucretius wrote, common in prose as well as verse, so that it is not to be compared to πυργώσας ῥήματα σεμνά, or 'build the lofty rhyme.'

I go on to the next paragraph:—

> Confer enim divina aliorum antiqua reperta;
> Namque Ceres fertur fruges, Liberque liquoris
> Vitigeni laticem mortalibus instituisse:
> Cum tamen his posset sine rebus vita manere,
> Ut fama est aliquas etiam nunc vivere gentes
> At bene non poterat sine puro pectore vivi:
> Quo magis hic merito nobis Deus esse videtur,
> Ex quo nunc etiam per magnas didita gentes
> Dulcia permulcent animos solatia vitae.

Here the spirit of prosaic reasoning is still more pronounced, and the traces of poetic colouring fainter. Except for the expression 'liquoris vitigeni laticem,' the passage might almost be transferred bodily into the apology for Epicureanism in the 'De Natura Deorum.' There is a flash of poetical feeling in the 'At bene non poterat sine puro pectore vivi,' less, however, in the expression than in the thought; but the next line, with its 'Quo magis,' recalls us back to prose. In the last two lines, again, poetical feeling is struggling to find itself words, but it scarcely attains to anything which a prose style would reject as inappropriate.

The rest of the exordium is too long to quote; but if it were carefully analysed, I do not think it would be found seriously to interfere with the impression which the previous lines are calculated to make. The various labours of Hercules are indeed characterised in poetical language, but there is too great sameness in the manner of the enumeration; it should have been either shorter or more varied. Virgil has twice dealt with the same subject; in the one case, he condenses the more prominent exploits of the great demigod into three pregnant lines; in the other, his enumeration is as copious as that of Lucretius, but he varies the mode of expression with an art which has made that particular passage celebrated among critics as a masterpiece of poetical effect. So there is great dignity of thought, and some beauty of language, in the lines where Lucretius asks what must be the effect on human nature where the wilderness of the breast is left uncleansed. But the pervading fault of the whole passage is the vein of argumentation that runs through it. The form of the argument is prosaic; the grounds on which it is rested are puerile. Hercules is not so great a benefactor to the world as Epicurus, because a riddance from savage beasts is less important than a riddance from savage passions. So far so good; the thought is a striking one, the argumentative form is all that can be objected to. But why are the beasts the less evil of the two? Because the monsters which Hercules slew lived chiefly in out-of-the-way places, just as the noxious creatures with which the world still swarms are mostly confined to mountains, forests, and jungles, which people need not visit unless they like. Had there been no Hercules, mankind might have congregated in the less savage parts of the globe, and left the beasts to their own quarters. If this be not characteristic of an

immature period of poetical conception, I really do not know what is.

To compare this with one of Virgil's greatest efforts, the 'me vero primum,' for example, would obviously be cruel, and, indeed, unfair. But I will take a very short passage from another part of the Second Georgic, and try to exemplify by its help the points in which, as I conceive it, the superiority of Virgil consists:—

> Nec minus interea fetu nemus omne gravescit,
> Sanguineisque inculta rubent aviaria baccis.
> Tondentur cytisi, taedas silva alta ministrat,
> Pascunturque ignes nocturni et lumina fundunt:
> Et dubitant homines serere atque impendere curam?

Virgil has been occupying himself during the greater part of the book with laying down rules for the rearing of fruit-trees, especially the vine; he now reminds the husbandman that there are other trees which in their degree will repay cultivation. How Lucretius would have done this, the specimen we have had of his manner will enable us easily to conjecture; but how does Virgil do it? The first line is little more than a brief statement of the fact that other trees yield valuable produce as well as fruit-trees proper; there is, however, a touch of imagination in 'interea,' and in 'gravescit;' while the precepts about planting and dressing vines have been going on, all this time the forest has been gradually bursting into fruitful life, unheeded. The next line, while professing to continue the general statement, which would have been prosaic, really gives a typical example, that of the elder or the arbute, with their crimson fruit. We know how Lucretius speaks of arbutes:—

> quae nunc hiberno tempore cernis
> Arbuta puniceo fieri matura colore:

where the fruit itself is characterised in picturesque language, but the way in which the mention of it is introduced is prosaic and matter of fact. But this is not all; by the use of the word 'aviaria,' Virgil calls up another thought, of an imaginative kind. There is nothing in the context to lead us to think of the birds, but the moment they are suggested, new lights seem to play round us; we see that their presence is in keeping with a state of nature and an absence of culture, while we know that they will build and sing even in cultivated trees, so that the reader is prepared beforehand to acquiesce in the injunction to cultivate when at last it comes. And all this is done by a single word. Lucretius, writing in a different connection, talks of 'frondiferas domos avium;' had Virgil used so many words, he would have destroyed the symmetry of the passage, and made the hint less dexterous in making it broader. Then come two lines on which I need not dwell, save to point out the art with which the lowly lucerne, browsed on by goats, is contrasted with the lofty pine forest, that contrast being indicated by the one word 'alta,' while, instead of a formal balance between 'cytisi' and 'pinus,' 'taedas,' the pinewood product, is put first in the clause, so that the trees producing the torches can be spoken of more generally, and, from a poetical point of view, more impressively as 'silva alta.' After these typical instances, the practical conclusion is introduced; but how is it introduced? With a 'quo circa' or 'quo magis,' or even an 'ergo' or 'igitur?' No; these are good words in their way, good enough even for Virgil elsewhere, but not good enough for him here. He does not reason with the husbandmen; he lifts up his hands wonderingly at their supineness. 'Et dubitant homines serere atque impendere curam?' In the face of all this, while the

vast capabilities of nature are hourly displayed before them, men are still hanging back, doubting whether to plant and bestow their pains. This, I contend, is high art; it is language really worthy of poetry. I see that Ribbeck, in his recently published 'Prolegomena Critica,' condemns this line; it is not found in the text of the Medicean, nor is it commented on by Servius, and Ribbeck himself fancies that it is inconsistent with what follows; so he assigns it to an interpolator, and speaks of the two other great MSS., the Palatine and Roman, as 'contaminated' by it—'inquinati.' Contamination and interpolation! it would be well for the world and for poetry if such contaminators and such interpolators were more generally at work. Heyne thought very differently of the merit of the line: 'Versus per se est praeclarus,' and Heyne, though Virgilian criticism has advanced in many respects beyond the point at which he left it (in a hundred years it would be a shame if it had not), was at any rate a man of judgment and poetical feeling.

I will not quote the rest of the paragraph, though I might do so with advantage. It would be easy to show that what Ribbeck supposes to be an inconsistency is really an additional proof of the art of the poet, who substitutes a picture for an argument, and darts on from point to point, varying the mode of expression, yet constantly enforcing the same conclusion, while critics and logical reasoners have to follow him as they may.

> Et iuvat undantem buxo spectare Cytorum
> Naryciaeque picis lucos: iuvat arva videre
> Non rastris, hominum non ulli obnoxia curae.

This is not intended as a simple commendation of natural products which spring up without the help of culture:

no: it is a burst of rapturous enthusiasm at the sight of what nature can do unassisted; but the sight is intended to animate the spectator to take part in the glorious work himself, and to foster the splendid luxuriance of vegetable growth within his own plot of ground. I do not say that this high poetical art is without its compensating disadvantages: I have said elsewhere more than once, and I repeat it here, that it is inconsistent with that perfect clearness which is the merit of didactic exposition; as we have just seen, it is liable to be misunderstood, even by a careful and painstaking critic: it has sometimes, as I venture to think, led Virgil into misrepresenting the precepts which we may suppose to have been delivered by his authorities. Verse, in fact, cannot do the work of prose, and a didactic poem which would be clear must be, as that of Lucretius is, in great part prosaic. What I do say is, that Virgil's whole mode of conception is poetical: he does not content himself, like Lucretius, with realising the great poetical features of his subject, and then evolving the thought in detail in a prose form, relieved at times by some striking poetical image: with him everything is poetical, small as well as great, the conception, the evolution of thought, the turns of expression, the very grammar and syntax.

It may be said that there are passages in the Fifth Book of the 'De Rerum Natura' finer than that which I have quoted. It is quite true: there are not a few which are much finer. Such, for example, are the lines in which the poet assures his friend that the threefold mechanism of the world will be consigned to destruction by a single day: such are those in which the helplessness of the new-born child is contrasted with the more fortunate condition of the young cattle; such is the passage

describing the moving train of the various seasons of the year; such are several portions of the long description of the origin and progress of human society, especially that grand outburst of feeling which tells us that piety consists not in bowing the covered head to a stone, and sprinkling the ground with the blood of four-footed beasts, but in the power to contemplate all nature with an untroubled soul. But these do not really touch the question at issue. I have never denied, nobody has ever denied, that the waste of didactic disquisition which extends through the poem is relieved by many cases of this sort, and that the Fifth Book can boast of an unusual number of such resting-places for the mind; my original remarks expressly excepted them, and it is not of them that I am now called to speak. Even of them I should be inclined to say, that with all their greatness they show obvious signs of an immature development of art: the grandeur is too long drawn out, too uniformly solemn, the grace and graphic beauty have an air of negligence and rusticity: there is gold, but it is gold still encumbered with dross, not gold purified and refined. But it is not of these that I have to speak. I am challenged by the assertion that the language of the staple of Lucretius' poem is equal to that of any of Virgil's, that, of the 1457 lines of which the Fifth Book consists, at least 700, nearly every other line, in fact, may be called brilliant; and I have endeavoured to meet the challenge by taking the first twenty lines of the book, a specimen, as I conceive, certainly above the average, and showing, if I mistake not, that scarcely one of these comes up to the standard which the highest poetical art would require. Say, if you please, that there is something in these lines better than the perfection of art—that there is a charming simplicity, an engaging frankness, a pleasing, un-

studied freedom, a fresh, genuine unconventionality, and what not. I do not question that. I do not question either that to some moods of the mind such qualities may appeal more forcibly than those which go along with exquisite literary finish, just as to talk to children may to some temperaments be pleasanter than to converse with grown men: all I contend for is that the poetical art which expresses itself in this way is not ripe but unripe, not adult but adolescent. Manly, in one sense, I may concede to my friend that it is: it is to a great extent the language of ordinary life, which cares more about general intelligibility than about absolute beauty: but it is not manly in relation to that species of composition to which it professes to appertain: it is the manhood of prose, not the manhood of poetry.

In passing on to speak of Catullus and Horace, I confess I feel less confident that I shall be able to substantiate any case to the satisfaction of everyone. The considerations which it involves are subtler; they are less clear to my own mind; I cannot hope to make them clear to others by the simple application of two or three broad strokes of the pencil. In the few remarks which I hazarded about Catullus in the article over whose *corpus vile* we are now contending, I certainly was thinking of his hexameters and elegiacs rather than of his lyrics. His hexameters and elegiacs, however, Mr. Munro virtually gives up; and, of course, it must be owned that technically they do not furnish a good subject for comparison with anything in the writings of Horace. But it is not easy to bring the two champions together on the lyric ground. Catullus' lyric poems, I need not say, are chiefly hendecasyllables; and to find any hendecasyllablic parallel we must pass over Horace altogether, and go on to Statius and Martial, who are at least as far removed from the

point which I consider to be the acme of Roman poetical composition on the one side, as Catullus is on the other. Mr. Munro suggests that we should try the experiment on the iambics and the glyconics; but to each of these there is, I think, a valid objection. I certainly should not wish to risk the claims of Horace on an examination of his Epodes, which, though marked by many of the qualities that distinguish his later works, would not, as I have ventured to intimate elsewhere, if they stood alone, justify the rank in lyric poetry which posterity in general has been willing to accord him. As to glyconics, Horace has only written them in combination with other metres; and the principal glyconic poem of Catullus, the Epithalamium of Junia and Mallius (so, according to Mr. Ellis, we are to call them for the future, not Julia and Manlius), seems to me to be too completely *sui generis* to admit of comparison. What I mean is this: the fault of Catullus, as I conceive it, like that of Lucretius, is a certain redundancy, now tending to luxuriant ornamentation, now to rustic simplicity; but in a poem like the Epithalamium these qualities happen to be exactly in place. It is written throughout in a style of which the diminutives which abound in it (a characteristic feature these of Catullus' diction) are a type and sample: there is a vein of ὑποκορισμός, as the Greeks called it, running through the piece, a petting, affectionate tone, which as little bears to be criticised by ordinary rules as the 'Little Language' of Swift's letters to Stella. I may add, too, that the medium through which we regard a poem of this kind is not altogether a transparent one; the antiquity of the language gives it a distinct advantage, making words appear graceful of which the modern equivalents might possibly jar against a correct taste just as the love poems which abound in the first division

of Mr. Palgrave's 'Golden Treasury' impress us in quite a different way from that in which we should be affected by similar thoughts similarly expressed by a poet of our own time. When Herrick talks of

> A careless shoe-string in whose tie
> I see a wild civility,

we feel that it is natural and graceful: when Mr. Tennyson speaks of 'the least little delicate aquiline curve in a sensitive nose,' almost the only blemish in what I venture to think the most exquisite of his poems, it offends us, at least it has always offended me, as too familiar. As, then, I cannot take the iambic or glyconic poems as a means of comparison, I will take the sapphic. Catullus has produced but two of these; they are, however, among his more distinguished performances; and one of them, perhaps, will serve our purpose. I will quote the earlier part of it:

> Ille mi par esse deo videtur,
> Ille, si fas est, superare divos,
> Qui sedens adversus identidem te
> Spectat et audit
> Dulce ridentem: misero quod omnis
> Eripit sensus mihi: nam simul te
> Lesbia, aspexi, nihil est super mi
> * * * *
> Lingua sed torpet, tenuis sub artus
> Flamma demanat, sonitu suopte
> Tintinant aures, gemina teguntur
> Lumina nocte.

This is a translation, it is true; but Catullus would not have thought of making a translation unless it had expressed his own feelings; he had no ambition, we may be sure, to introduce to Roman readers Sappho's poem as Sappho's; and, as a matter of fact, though the version is

a close one, it is sufficiently characteristic of its author. I suppose it is generally admitted to be inferior to the original; the only charm, indeed, which Catullus can be said to have added to those which he has carried away from the Greek is the second line, which is a graceful ascent upon the first, and where the 'si fas est' is eminently beautiful. Gaining this, he has lost what is of more importance, the ἄδυ φωνείσας, which, in Sappho, comes before the γελαίσας ἰμερόεν; 'dulce ridentem' has to do duty for smile and voice both. Throughout the version there is an absence of any strikingly felicitous expression, with the one exception which I mentioned just now; compare, for instance, the commonplace 'lingua sed torpet' with Horace's 'Cur facunda parum decoro Inter verba cadit lingua silentio?' while there are words like 'identidem' and 'suopte,' which seem more appropriate to prose than to poetry. The first, indeed, he may have used for rhythmical reasons, to represent the ἐνάντιός τοι of the Greek, though it is to be observed that he has also employed it in his only other Sapphic ode; for the second I fear not even this excuse can be pleaded. How unlike this is to the language of Horace we shall at once see, if we recollect the tumult that has been made about the solitary place in his Odes where the word 'eius' occurs; a word which, whether or no it is actually found in Catullus, we may safely say would never have brought suspicion upon the reading of any line in which it had happened to appear. Lastly, in point of rhythm (for when we are speaking of Catullus rhythm may be brought into the question), there is an unpleasant sameness between the sound of 'simul te' and that of 'super mi,' ending two successive lines. Turn now but for a single moment to Horace. I will not go

beyond the two lines of which Catullus' poem has doubtless reminded everyone:—

Dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo,
Dulce loquentem.

These lines, I suppose it will be admitted, have enjoyed more fame even than their Greek original; and why? Partly, doubtless, because Roman poetry is much more of a household word with modern nations than Greek; but is that all? I believe that a large part of their popularity is due to the balanced and symmetrical form into which they are cast. In Sappho there is no attempt to preserve a verbal or rhythmical balance between the sweet utterance and the charming smiles. Each expression consists of a participle in the genitive case constructed with an adjective in the neuter gender; but there the resemblance ends. The order of the words is not the same; they do not occupy the same place in the verse. Horace, on the contrary, has aimed before all things at symmetry. He is not careful to mark any shade of difference that Sappho may have intended between ἄδυ and ἰμερόεν; their likeness is far more to him than their unlikeness. The same word is used for both, and it occupies the same place in the two lines; and the correspondence of sound between the two participles enhances the symmetrical effect. This, in fact, may be said to illustrate generally the difference between Catullus and Horace as lyric artists. The Sapphic stanza of Catullus—and probably the same remark might be extended to his other measures—is modelled on the type of the Greek; he represents Greek cadences; the effects which he seeks are those which are sought after in Greek poetry. Horace has not attempted to cope with Sappho and Alcæus on their own ground; adopting their measures, he has at the same

time remodelled them; his cadences are his own; and his language, far from representing their flowing Æolic, where perhaps it may be said that half the charm consists in the dialect, is terse, polished, and artistic. I fear he was scarcely thinking of this when he said—

> Libera per vacuum posui vestigia princeps:
> Non aliena meo pressi pede:

but the boast is one which in this sense he might have made with justice. The same thing would be seen if we were to compare Catullus and Ovid in their management of the elegiac couplet. Catullus follows the Greek structure; Ovid has introduced a structure of his own. I will not now discuss which form is in itself the more pleasing; perhaps some will consider that the practice of successive generations of composers of Ovidian elegiacs has settled that question. But even those who think it would have been well if we had been taught to write lines like 'Et mutam nequiquam alloquerer cinerem' may not be unwilling to admit that more art is shown in framing a new type than in copying an old one. This is the glory of the Augustan poets; in the province of language and metre, at any rate, they were genuine inventors; and if their works do not exhibit the exulting strength of freedom, they realise more perfectly than anything which went before them the grace and majesty of law.

I am not so zealous a defender of my Augustan clients as to contend that nothing was lost to Roman poetry by this process of refinement. Something, I fear, must always be lost in all changes, social and political as well as literary; each phase has its characteristic charm, the passing away of which leaves a blank not easily filled; and a state of things which shall combine all excellences

is an ideal which we cannot even imagine as capable of being realised, εἰ μὴ ἴσως παρὰ τοῖς θεοῖς. Rules of writing, like rules of action, have necessarily a cramping tendency; in general they are not accepted till experience has shown that their absence leads to waste of power, delusion, and wrong-doing; they propose to foster excellence by excluding error; and they are consequently more concerned to prohibit everything that is wrong, than to legalise everything that is right. Perhaps the tendencies in Roman poetry which Virgil and his contemporaries set themselves to correct deserved a less severe check than they received; perhaps the diamond need not have lost so much of its original substance in order to be fashioned into a jewel. But no one, it seems to me, can justly refuse them the praise of having been the first to address themselves to the question how to endow the poetry of their country with appropriate language and appropriate metre. Ennius, indeed, formed a conception of the problem, and made an attempt, after his fashion, to solve it; but though his services as a pioneer are to be acknowledged with gratitude, the time at which he lived rendered it impossible that he should understand the real artistic capacities of his native tongue, or produce anything which in point of art should bear a moment's comparison with any Greek model. But the writers of the last age of the commonwealth seem almost to have allowed themselves to drift before the currents of their time, according as the influence of prose composition or of Greek poetry happened in each case to be the stronger. Lucretius complains of the poverty of his native language, but the complaint is made in the interest of science, not in that of poetry; of the need of a diction and a metre worthy of being compared with those of Greek masterpieces he does not

appear to be conscious. Catullus, at least in his hexameters and elegiacs, as Mr. Munro admits, treads closely in the steps of the Alexandrine writers. The great Augustan poets, on the other hand, so far as style and metre are concerned, are singularly independent of Greek influences. Their general conceptions, their types of poetry, the subjects of their poems, are freely borrowed from Greek, and often from Alexandrine sources; they translate unhesitatingly from the Greek, and exhibit the result as their own; but when we come to the details of execution, the thousand minutiæ of language and of rhythm, they give abundant proof that, though they have been on the watch for every opportunity to profit by what Greek artists have done, they have thought out the problem for themselves. Virgil's language, if borrowed at all, is borrowed not from any of his predecessors in pastoral, didactic, or epic poetry, from Theocritus, or Hesiod, or Apollonius, but from Sophocles. His treatment of the hexameter is copied from no Greek model whatever, whether Ionic or Alexandrine. Mr. Munro is far too sweeping when he talks of Virgil as 'affecting' the spondaic ending which, as he truly says, was in vogue with the Alexandrians and their imitators. I have not gone through the calculation; but, judging from Gossrau's Excursus on the Virgilian hexameter, and from my own recollections, I should question whether thirty instances can be produced out of the 9,896 lines of which the 'Æneid' consists. I take up Apollonius, and I find one or two spondaic endings in every page I look at; I take up Catullus, and I find at least twenty-seven in 400 lines; nay, I take up Homer, who lived before Alexandrians and their mannerisms were thought of, and I find nine or ten in the first 200 lines of the First Book of the 'Iliad.' Virgil takes hints from all the masters of

hexameter rhythm that have preceded him; but he binds himself to none; he considers the condition under which the Roman hexameter can be perfected, and he produces something, not Greek, not Alexandrine, but Roman. He had evidently formed a strong conviction that, as a general rule, words of more than three syllables ought not to be used at the end of a hexameter: and upon that basis he constructed a poem of nearly ten thousand lines. Possibly he may have had predecessors among his own countrymen in carrying out this rule of exclusion; one such he would certainly seem to have had, a writer who is not generally numbered among those who have improved Roman poetry, I mean Cicero. But the consensus of the classical authors of both nations was undoubtedly the other way: those of Greece were unanimous, those of Rome formed at any rate a majority: and to have succeeded in the face of all this experience in introducing what was to all intents and purposes a new national hexameter, is in itself sufficient to establish Virgil's rank, not as a mere Alexandrine copyist, but as an original artist. I am aware that on this especial point I do not differ from my friend, who has himself, in an eloquent sentence, done full justice to the Virgilian hexameter; 'that elaborate and complicated, yet exquisite perfection of rhythm,' as he truly calls it, 'which is utterly different from the Homeric movement, and yet appears as well adapted to the Latin forms of speech as the other is to the Ionic.' But he is a little inclined to mar the effect of his praise by after thoughts and exceptions: he talks of concessions to Greek rhythm and prettinesses in which Virgil has indulged, but from which Lucretius is free: and he evidently thinks that his favourite poet is so far the more manly versifier of the two. To speak in this way is

really to be unfair to Virgil. His 'circumspicit Oriona' is not a concession to Alexandrine daintiness, any more than his 'simul hoc animo hauri' is a concession to Roman roughness: each, with him, is simply one of the innumerable experiments by the aid of which he works out the complex harmony of his verse: like the bee in Quintilian's simile, he imbibes the essences of all flowers and distils them into a perfect sweetness which does not exhibit the characteristic flavour of any. Criticism may identify the effects which he has taken from others; but criticism must admit that he has proved his right to them by the perfect appropriateness with which he has contrived to endow them.

I suppose that in strictness I am bound to complete my case by passing on to the poets of the silver age, and showing by a comparison of their style with that of Virgil and Horace that the Augustan period was in reality, as in common opinion it has always been considered to be, the crowning point of Roman poetical art. It would be easy to make the comparison: in fact, I attempted something of the kind three or four years ago on an occasion like this, when I spoke to you about Statius and the later epic poetry of Rome. But time will not allow of my doing so now; and I confess I venture to hope that what I have already said may have put the subject in such a light as to render the task a superfluous one. I mean to say that I trust my remarks may have tended to show that the line which, in my judgment, separates Lucretius from Virgil, and, in a less degree, Catullus from Horace, is not arbitrarily or capriciously drawn. I have pointed out that the question is not, as my friend appears to consider it, a question of the use of language, but a question of the use of language for the purposes of poetry. Whether the

Augustan age was an advance on the last age of the commonwealth in respect of prose composition is a point which I am not concerned to rule one way or the other. It is quite possible that the study of Alexandrine Greek may have begun even then to tell unfavourably upon the language of Rome: it is quite possible that prose was being corrupted and enervated by the operation of the same causes by which poetry was being purified and refined. Of course, too, it must be admitted that the golden age passed into the silver—that as Virgil succeeded Lucretius, so Lucan and Statius succeeded Virgil. The laws of growth and decay in poetry, like those of the development of national life, are a subject on which we have doubtless much, very much to learn; but it would be vain to deny that many of the signs which in the writers of the silver age we recognise as symptomatic of a period of decadence are directly traceable to causes which were already at work in the Augustan era. Granting, however, to the full the connection of the conditions of the two periods, what have we really conceded? simply that rottenness comes after ripeness, that prime is the harbinger of decline. At any rate, if Virgil and his contemporaries are to be considered as already touched by the canker, Lucretius will not profit by their condemnation. Pure model of perfect Latin idiom as he may be, it is impossible to contend that his language satisfies the conditions of the highest poetical art. All that we shall then be able to say will be, that Roman poetry never attained perfection at all: the year had its spring, its autumn, and its winter, but it had no summer.

I feel that I have been executing an ungracious task in calling attention to the faults of writers whose essential greatness I should myself be among the last to question.

Criticism in such cases can hardly fail to appear carping and microscopic: and I have more than once been reminded, during the process, of the examination which, in the 'Frogs' of Aristophanes, Æschylus has to undergo at the hands of his envious rival. But I may plead that though the names which I have seemed to disparage are great, those which I have endeavoured to vindicate are greater; and that whatever may be the claims which an illustrious poet has upon our deference, they cannot be paramount to the duty which we owe to that truth of critical judgment without which our sense of excellence in poetry is a blind and unintelligent instinct.

By way of Appendix, I subjoin a few remarks on another point in controversy between Mr. Munro and myself, of somewhat more limited interest.

In the article before mentioned I hazarded an opinion that conjectural emendation had been less successfully applied to the texts of Latin than to those of Greek poets; a fact, if fact it be, which I inclined to attribute not to the inferiority of the scholars who had attempted the task, but to something in the nature of the task itself, though I did not venture to say what that thing was. I left the problem to be solved by those whose learning and sagacity exceeded mine. Mr. Munro[1] denies the existence of the fact; admitting its apparent truth, he accounts for it by the length of time during which Latin criticism has been prosecuted, as compared with Greek, what looks new and wonderful in the case of the latter language seeming commonplace in the case of the former; Bentley, to the difference of whose success in dealing

[1] Postscript to second edition of *Lucretius*.

with Greek and Latin authors I had appealed in support of my view, he thinks, would have succeeded better with Lucilius than with Menander, worse with Sophocles than with Horace, the difference which I had noted really depending on the accident of his having taken up a Latin author who did not need emending; Madvig, Ritschl, and Lachmann, he contends, have done more for the restoration of Latin fragments than any scholar with the same opportunities has done for the restoration of Greek; Lucretius, of whom I had especially spoken, depends really on a single MS., and has already yielded to his earlier editors a harvest of easy emendations quite equal to all that the Porsonian school has done for the corrupter plays of Æschylus and Euripides; while Lachmann, besides eminent successes in 'the lower art of verbal emendation,' has in many cases, by the combined force of sagacity and industry, 'forced his way into the very work-room of the poet,' so that it may be fairly asked whether any Greek author similarly circumstanced has been as fortunate in his editor as Lucretius has been in Lachmann.

Now, I think the difference of opinion between Mr. Munro and myself is partly due to his misapprehension of my meaning. I was speaking throughout my remarks of 'the lower art of verbal emendation,' not of anything else, whether in itself more or less important; and I was speaking of emendations, not of emenders.[1] The second point I may dismiss at once, merely observing that I did not intend to compare the individual labours of Lachmann or Madvig with those of Porson or Elmsley, but the aggregate of emendations of Greek poets with the aggre-

[1] It is true that I particularised Lachmann and Bentley; but the whole tenor of my remarks will show that I instanced them merely as representatives of emendatory criticism in Greek or Latin.

gate of emendations of Roman poets: the first requires a few words.

I repeat, then, that I intended my remarks to be confined strictly to verbal emendation, to that art which restores not only the sense but the very words of the author. This is an art which is more or less *sui generis*; it is fitful and occasional in its operations; with some scholars it seems to depend on a peculiar conformation of mind; with others it perhaps results from that practice in Greek and Latin composition which, as Julius Hare pointed out many years ago, gives English scholars an advantage over the scholars of the Continent; with others, again, it comes in the later years of a life of study, as the reward of a careful attention to the language of the classical writers. Its results are sometimes valuable, sometimes trifling; sometimes, though important in themselves, they do not really imply any great merit in their author, who has simply made a lucky guess; at others, they are the last spark which fires a long train laid by learning and research; but they have the one characteristic of certainty. I do not mean to say that many plausible but untrue emendations are not made by critics, and accepted by other critics; what I do say is, that it is the characteristic of a real emendation that, as far as it goes, it shall restore not merely the meaning of the author, but the actual words in which he expressed the meaning. It is quite possible to put the sense of a passage in a true light, but to leave the words uncertain. A case in point is to be found in Æschylus' 'Agamemnon,' vv. 764 foll. of Dindorf's edition. There it seems clear that an antithesis is intended between the ancient wrong, παλαία ὕβρις, and the later wrong to which it gives birth, νεαρά or νέα ὕβρις; it seems clear, too, though all scholars have not seen it in that light, that the antithesis is intro-

duced in the words which are given in the MSS. as νεαρὰ φάους κότον. But there certainty, or even high probability, ends: νέα δ' ἔφυσεν κόρον, though it restore sense and metre, cannot be said to be more than plausible, as it is just possible that the antistrophe may be corrupt; while νέα does not sufficiently account for νεαρά nor ἔφυσεν for φάους, and there are other plausible emendations of κότον, if κότον is to be emended at all: then the metre, and, consequently the text, of the next line is uncertain; and, lastly, it is not clear whether μελαίνας μελάθροισιν Ἄτας should stand, εἰδομέναν being changed into εἰδόμενον, or whether μελαίνα . . . Ἄτα εἰδομένα is not more likely to be the true reading. Thus, while criticism has done much for the sense of this passage, it has left the words nearly as they were. It has ascertained the sort of words which Æschylus might have used: as to the words which he actually did use we are still in the dark. Why, in this particular case, the words should remain intractable after the sense has yielded, is not easy to say. Something, no doubt, is due to the choral metre, which cannot always be established with certainty, especially where, as here, some doubt hangs over the antistrophe. The state of the MSS. of the 'Agamemnon,' too, has probably a good deal to do with it: the great authority, the Medicean MS., is deficient in this part of the play, which depends on two inferior copies, one of them at least tampered with by the transcriber. These I give merely as specimens of the causes which may have contributed to a result, the complete account of which is probably as insoluble a problem as the true reading of the passage itself. One thing, however, is certain, that the reason why the true reading of this passage has not been recovered is not that the critics who have attempted the task have been negligent or incompetent. And this

is precisely what I mean to assert with regard to the application of emendatory criticism to Latin. If I am right, as I still think I am, in supposing that it has been less successful there than in Greek, I gladly admit, what indeed I maintained from the first, that the cause of failure is to be sought, not in the critics, but in the subject-matter on which they have been engaged. At any rate, I hope I have now made my meaning clear, and shown the distinct and limited nature of the issue which it was my intention to raise. That criticism which restores the meaning of a passage while leaving the words doubtful is not emendatory in the technical sense, but interpretative. The triumphs of interpretative criticism form a much wider subject, with which I did not at all propose to deal. To institute a comparison between what has been done in interpreting Greek and what has been done in interpreting Latin is a task which would far exceed my modicum of knowledge, nor did I mean to hint, in the most distant way, that in that department Greek scholars had the slightest advantage. There, at any rate, as I expressed it in this very article, 'the battle is to the strong.'

Mr. Munro thinks that, in comparing the labours of the Porsonian school on the Greek drama with those of Lachmann on Lucretius, I am guilty of an injustice in the form of a practical anachronism. There are, he justly remarks, several stages in the emendation of the text of a classical author: the first critic gathers his fruit by hundreds, the second by tens, the third by units. The Porsonian critics, he contends, answer not to Lachmann, but to Lambinus, or Marullus, or both. 'Surely the emendations which a critic hardly now deigns to mention, such as *fera moenera*, out of *feram onera*; *vidi reddere*, out of *videre odore*; *suavi devinxit*, out of *sua videt vinxit*; *vera viai*, out of

ver aula; fuit umquam, out of *fultum quam; uti risu tremulo*, out of *utiris ut aemulo; aevom vitamque*, out of *aevo multamque*, and hundreds such as these, equal all the manipulations of αι and ε, η and ει, and the like, which Porsonian critics have for two generations expended on such corrupt plays as the "Agamemnon," "Choephorœ," and "Bacchæ," which, therefore, may be brought into comparison with the manuscript text of Lucretius.' An inexperienced reader might suppose from this that the Porsonian critics were the first who attempted to restore the text of Æschylus and Euripides. As a matter of fact, I need not say that Æschylus and Euripides went through the earlier stages of emendatory criticism long before Porson was born; and it is to the changes introduced into their texts, in these earlier stages, that one would naturally compare the emendations of Lucretius by Marullus or Lambinus. I do not profess to go thoroughly into the matter: my knowledge of the minutiæ of Greek criticism is pretty much confined to Æschylus, and even that has suffered greatly from years of disuse; but I should have no difficulty in hazarding the assertion that at least two stages may be distinguished in the history of the text of Æschylus before the middle of the eighteenth century; the one represented by such men as Robortellus, Turnebus, and Victorius; the other, by such as Auratus, Canter, and Stanley. Of these, I think, it may be said, as Mr. Munro says of the two classes of Lucretian editors, that the first class counts its successes by hundreds, the second by tens. At any rate, there can be no doubt that what they accomplished between them is not to be despised. I will take a few instances from the first chorus of the 'Choephorœ,' not that I wish to risk my case on an examination of that single play, but that it happens to be the one which I know most intimately. I confine myself

to *bonâ fide* emendations of the text of the Medicean MS., leaving out those instances, of which there are not a few, where corruptions introduced from a later MS., or from the earliest editions, were afterwards removed by critical ingenuity. v. 22 (ed. Dind.), ἔβην is Robortellus' correction (I assume the identity of his MS. with the Medicean) of ἔβη. v. 23, Arnald, a critic of the second period, restored σὺν κτύπῳ for συνκύπτωι. v. 24, Stanley changed φοινισσαμυγμοῖς into φοινίοις ἀμυγμοῖς. v. 26, ὃ ἰυγμοῖσι is Canter's alteration of διοιγμοῖσι. v. 29, πρόστερνοι was restored by Turnebus for πρόστελνοι. v. 38, Turnebus changed ἔλαχον into ἔλακον. v. 45, μωμένα μ' ἰάλλει, Stanley; μωμέν ἀμιλλεῖ, MS. Med. v. 47, ἐκβαλεῖν, Stanley; ἐκβάλλειν, MS. Med. v. 48, λύτρον, Canter; λυγρόν, MS. Med. v. 56, φρενός, Victorius; φρένες, MS. Med. v. 61, δίκας, Turnebus; δίκαι, MS. Med. v. 80, πικρόν, Victorius; πικρῶν, MS. Med. v. 83, παχνουμένη, Turnebus; παχνουμένην, MS. Med. These changes are most of them easy enough, and only one or two of them reflect much credit on their inventor; but they will, I think, show that the history of the text of Æschylus has been not very unlike that of Lucretius, and that more than one generation of editors had been required to place the plays in a fairly readable condition before Porson and the latter critics came.[1] Yet I doubt whether the criticism of Lachmann and his successors has done as much for the restoration of the actual words of Lucretius, as that of Porson and his successors has done for those of Æschylus. Take, for instance, Porson's διοσδότῳ γάνει ('Ag.' 1391), τοῦδ' ἄνοιγε ('Supp.' 321), εὑρεθέντα (ib. 491), δορυκανεῖ μόρῳ

[1] A comparison of the whole number of corruptions in the first 120 lines of the *Choephoræ* and of those in the corresponding portion of the First Book of *Lucretius*, as given respectively in the best MS., seems to show that the former number is to the latter something like three to one.

(ib. 987); Hermann's ἐλπίδων (ib. 95), δύναται ('Cho.' 374), ἰηλεμιστρίας (ib. 424); Dindorf's καιρία ('Ag.' 1122); Franz's γᾶ χθονίων τε τιμαί ('Cho.' 399).[1] With regard to the value of the MS. authority for their respective texts, Æschylus and Lucretius seem to be nearly on a level. Dindorf and Cobet believe that all the MSS. of Æschylus are derived from the Med. MS.; and whether or no this is actually true, it is generally admitted that the other authorities for the several plays are comparatively of little value. This was what I had in my mind when, speaking of the MSS. of the different Latin poets whom Lachmann has edited, I risked the assertion, 'there are MSS. of each enough to stimulate critical ingenuity, not enough to supersede it.' I was thinking of the two authors with whom my own editorial experience has made me most familiar, Æschylus and Virgil, and I meant in effect that Lucretius is in the condition of the former, not of the latter. Perhaps I wrote carelessly; at any rate, I can assure Mr. Munro that I did not mean to contravene Lachmann's doctrine that all the MSS. of Lucretius are

[1] Mr. Munro asks 'to what play of Euripides does Porson or any of his followers restore whole verses with the same certainty as Lachmann gives back to Lucretius lines like "Effluat ambrosiae quasi vere et nectari' linctus, Qua nil est homini quod amariu' frondeat esca?"' I confess I think that, estimated by Mr. Munro's own standard, Wellauer did at least as much for the text of Æschylus when he restored, in *Supp.* 154 foll., μελανθὶς ἡλιώκτυπον γένος τὸν γάϊον . . . Ζῆνα . . ἰξόμεσθα. Those who went before him, following the corrupt readings ᾗ διώκτυπον . . . τοὐγγάϊον, supposed the poet to be speaking of the Titans in Tartarus. Τὸν γάϊον had been previously conjectured by a writer in the *Quarterly Review*, but there is no reason to think that Wellauer knew of it. By the way, I think Mr. Munro should have mentioned, as Lachmann does, that 'frondeat' had been already conjectured by the 'Itali' for 'fronde ac.' This limits Lachmann's actual discovery to 'ambrosiae et nectari' linctus' in the first line, and 'esca' in the second. I have no wish to disparage either, or to detract from the merit of the happy thought of the parallel, Hom. *Od.* ix. 359; but I do not believe that anyone familiar with the achievements of Greek criticism would despair of finding something to equal their felicity.

ultimately traceable to one. Yet I venture to think that what I said is not inconsistent with Mr. Munro's own account of the MSS. of his author. The one MS. of Lucretius, to which all the rest are traceable, is not in existence; two copies, A and B, which were made from it immediately or mediately, exist at Leyden; fragments of one or two MSS., bearing a close resemblance to B, are preserved elsewhere; Poggio had a copy resembling A, which is now lost, and from it the remaining copies, sixteen or more, were derived. Now, if the original MS. existed, the copies would of course be worthless, except indeed in places where the original had suffered, subsequently to their transcription, by time or accident; as it is, most of them probably have their value, some more and some less, so far as it cannot be shown that they are copied from each other. Lachmann has apparently been able to determine with something like certainty what this archetypal MS. was like, the mode of writing, the number of lines in each page, &c.; but Mr. Munro does not consider it absolutely certain that even A was copied from it at first hand, without some intervening transcript. A, though generally far more correct than B, occasionally misses points which B hits, and both of them appear to be occasionally set right by the later copies, and that not always from critical conjecture. No doubt, as Mr. Munro says, all these aids merely help us to get at the reading of a single MS.; but this can scarcely be called a peculiar hardship. The students of Lucretius are not worse off than many of their neighbours; perhaps they may be even better off. Let us suppose that Dindorf and Cobet are right, and that the Medicean MS. is the one authority for the text of Æschylus. We do not know from what copy this MS. was transcribed: at any rate the copy is lost, like the archetype of the Lucretian MSS. Would it

not have been better for the student of Æschylus if, instead of the Medicean and its subordinate MSS., they had a number of MSS. more or less co-ordinate, all depending on a copy unknown? They would then have had several paths leading to the supposed lost MS.; now they have only one. It would almost seem as if the very completeness of Lachmann's discovery had led his successors to take an unreal view of their position. They realise the existence of their lost archetype so vividly that they habitually view the actually extant MSS. in their relation to it: and thus they speak of those copies in language which, though not untrue in itself, may easily convey an untrue impression to persons who wish to estimate the MS. resources for the text of Lucretius in comparison with those for the text of other authors. Of course the fact remains that an author, all of whose copies can be traced to one archetype existent or non-existent, is probably in a worse condition than an author whose text has several sources; though, before we can assert even this positively, we must know something of the date of the archetype and the history of the text. It appears hard, too, that when the archetype is known to have been a faulty one, we should not possess even its faults at first hand, but should have first to guess them out by the help of yet more faulty transcripts, and then to decipher the original text by their means. Yet it is also true, if I may return to the proposition which began the discussion, that a certain amount of uncertainty is required to stimulate critical ingenuity. Even now I am not without fear that the statement I made in a note on a former page may be turned against me, not indeed by Mr. Munro, but by some other student of Lucretius, and that I may be told that the reason why Æschylus has been more successfully restored than Lucretius is, that his MS. text is in a worse state.

There is another point on which Mr. Munro misapprehends my meaning. He thinks I am speaking of emendations of Latin authors generally, not specifically of emendations of Latin poets; and so he appeals to Madvig's restorations of Livy, and Ritschl's corrections of inscriptions. Anyone who will favour me by looking at the article in question will see that here, again, it was the narrower issue that I meant to raise. The proposition from which I start is contained in these words:—'No scholar, so far as we are aware, for the last two centuries, at least, has done for any Latin poet what Bentley did for the fragments of Greek poetry, what Porson did for the Greek drama.'[1] I then go into detail, and speak of Bentley's Epistle to Mill, and emendations of Menander as compared with his Horace and Manilius, and of Lachman's editions of Catullus, Propertius, and Lucretius.[2] Afterwards, speaking generally, I talk of the results of criticism as applied to Latin and Greek writers, of a new critical edition of a Latin author, of the special impracticability of the text of Latin authors;[3] but I do not suppose that I intended to introduce into the conclusion an assertion obviously going beyond the original proposition and the facts adduced in support of that proposition. At any rate, I wish to be more guarded now. I have myself next to no acquaintance with the textual criticism of either Greek or Latin prose authors; and there is a reason in the nature of the question itself which would dispose me in any case to prefer dealing with the narrower field. A prose author naturally suggests greater laxity of emendation than a poet; the conditions under which a word has to be supplied are far less accurately marked out; if absolute literal conformity to the corrupt reading is disregarded as too strict, as it must occasionally be, the

[1] p. 240. [2] Ib. [3] p. 241.

sense is the only guide. Now I only profess to deal, as I have explained repeatedly, with 'the lower art of verbal emendation,' with that which restores, not the general sense of the writer, but the very words in which it was originally expressed; and therefore I may reasonably decline to follow Mr. Munro into a field where the question between us cannot so satisfactorily be brought to the test as in that in which we have hitherto been contending. As to the fragments of Lucilius, which he instances as a proof of Lachmann's success in emending Latin, I should have no objection to accept his challenge, if it were given in a less hypothetical way. 'Observe,' he says, 'the masterly power with which Lachmann throughout his Lucretius breathes life and meaning into the disjointed members of Lucilius. Had he been spared for a few months longer, he would have given us this author in such a shape that no existing restoration of any fragmentary Greek writer would have borne a moment's comparison with the work of Lachmann.' I have gone through the fragments of Lucilius mentioned in Lachmann's notes, and my general impression is, that though in dealing with them he shows a vigour and ability markedly contrasting with the feebleness of Gerlach, and only occasionally paralleled by one or two earlier scholars like Douza, he has made comparatively few restorations which can be called certain. The whole number of his emendations is about forty; and of these there are, perhaps, twelve which may fairly be styled more than probable, though all of them are not of the same importance.[1] Is

[1] There are forty-eight references to Lucilius in Lachmann's index (he has omitted one that he might have made, to p. 76 of his Commentary). Some of them are to passages quoted but not amended; but, on the other hand, in several of the pages referred to Lucilius is emended more than once. The emendations which I should call successful are those contained in pp. 66 (Nonius 78), 79 (Non. 503), 82 (Non. 140), 116 (Non. 472), 170 (Non. 237, id. 414), 188 (Non. 296), 212 (Serv. on Virg. G. iii. 159), 248 (Non. 458),

this a large proportion? It is true that we cannot say what Lachmann would have done, had he given us the whole of the remains of Lucilius; but we may reasonably suppose that he would not have inserted any of these emendations in a commentary on another author, if he had not himself set much store by it.

I hope I have now made my meaning sufficiently clear. A large part of the controversy between Mr. Munro and myself, I trust, is now set at rest already, by the explanation that I was speaking throughout of verbal emendation, and of that as applied to Latin and Greek poets, rather than to Latin and Greek authors generally. But there is still a good deal at issue between us; and knowing what I do of my friend's acquaintance with the subject, I cannot but fear that I may prove to have been mistaken. If, indeed, the question simply turned on the positive value of what has been done for Lucretius, I should think many times before I adventured my ignorance against his knowledge. But the question is a comparative one; and it is because I believe that justice has not been done to the other member of the comparison that I ask to be heard a second time.

276 (Non. 370), 329 (Non. 255), 409 (Velius Longus, 2227). There is a brilliant one, p. 413 (Non. 84); but where the data are so few we cannot talk of certainty.

EARLY ROMAN TRAGEDY AND EPIC POETRY.[1]

ROMAN TRAGEDY, more perhaps than any of the other branches of Roman poetry, appears to have been an exotic growth. In comedy, for example, we see the confluence of two distinct streams—the exuberance of native pleasantry, welling out from the heart of a rustic population in Fescennine verses and rude Atellane entertainments, and the more regular course of the Athenian drama, flowing on in an ever-widening, if not ever-deepening channel, as it were in forgetfulness of the fountain-head which it had left so long behind it; and though the torrent may seem to have been at once lost in the river, yet we perceive that the great volume of waters must have derived new elements of life and freshness. Among the Greeks, indeed, tragedy seems to have been evolved, whether by Thespis or by his successors, from rudiments as little calculated to excite pathos or deep emotion as any of the Etruscan performances which the old Italians loved; but we feel that it is not in such embryo states of being, equally capable, as far as we can see, of being matured into one or the other of two distinct organisms, that the actual type of either can be said to exist. There seems to have been nothing in the native institutions of early Italy answering to the nucleus round which Grecian tragedy gathered and clustered the Bacchic chorus; no depth of dithyrambic fervour, by entering into which the population might have been led on to conceive or appreciate a high and heroic argument. Other conditions there may have been, no less adapted

[1] Reprinted from the *North British Review*, No. lxxxii.

to give the impulse required for the production of a national tragedy; but these, if present, must have been neutralised or retarded in their operation, so as to delay, if not to postpone indefinitely, the set time of birth. The same causes which prevented Rome from creating tragedy for herself influenced her treatment of it when adopted from without. Greek tragedy, in its progress from youth to manhood, was ever travelling further and further from the East, ever losing sight more and more of its Bacchic origin. The chorus, which had once been everything, was coming to be less and less; dominant in Æschylus; in Sophocles, occupying what may be thought to be a just medium; in Euripides, not indeed contracting its dimensions, but frequently standing in no very close relation to the business of the play, virtually a mere relief between the acts; in Agathon and his successors, attaining this consummation formally, as we learn from Aristotle, who tells us that they were in the habit of introducing ἐμβόλιμα or insertions, songs written for no one play in particular, and therefore suiting any. The next step in the development would obviously have been to anticipate the course taken centuries after by the modern drama, and discard the chorus altogether in tragedy as well as in comedy—a result to which one at least of the causes assigned for the cessation of the comic chorus, the expense of training, might very well have contributed; if indeed we are not entitled to assert that the step was actually taken, and with Quintilian and Schlegel, to recognise in the new comedy of Menander and Philemon the last phase of Athenian tragedy, the Euripidean drama worked out to its completion. It was not in the genius of an imitative people to form such an anticipation, any more than it was in the philosophy of an uncritical age to perceive such an analogy. The early

Roman inventors doubtless regarded the chorus as an integral part of the play they copied, and Horace, two centuries later, is as clear in requiring that it should be made relevant to the action as Aristotle himself; but the unreality of a Roman chorus must have made itself felt from the first. The Romans seem to have had no conception of that complex metrical variety, that 'linked sweetness, long drawn out,' and returning back upon itself, which characterise the structure of the Greek choral ode. To copy its metres in their manifold combinations would have been a prolongation of servile labour, from which even they would have recoiled, even supposing them to have thoroughly understood what they read; while they do not seem to have had anything analogous in the rude simplicity of their own poetical repertory. Horace appears to have regarded Pindar's dithyrambics as a mere inspiration, not bound by artistic rule, and therefore not to be attained by artistic practice; in the words of their common imitator, Cowley,

> Pindar is imitable by none,
> The Phœnix Pindar is a vast species alone:

yet modern science has discovered the laws of the Pindaric measure, and modern art, or modern genius, has produced odes of Pindaric complexity. So in the remains of the early Roman tragedians, when we pass beyond the common iambic or trochaic of the dialogue, we find only the simplest metres, anapæsts chiefly, with here and there a fragment of bacchiac or cretic, such as Plautus uses in the *canticum*, the recitative performed by a single voice to the sound of flute-music, and accompanied by gesticulation. Seneca, who is uniformly careful to allot to the chorus a respectable portion of each play, generally confines himself to anapæsts or some of

the simpler lyric metres, such as asclepiads, sapphics, or glyconics; and in the two or three instances where he attempts something more elaborate, by mixing them and others together, the result is a curious piece of workmanship of the Chinese sort, not unlike the poem in which an old grammarian has combined all the measures of Horace—a composition which, if ever produced in the theatre, for which Seneca's dramas were probably never intended, would doubtless have issued in a mere medley of discords. It is, in fact, what we know of the arrangements of the Roman theatre which enables us to estimate the self-confessed insignificance of the Roman chorus. 'The Roman orchestra,' we are told, 'contained no Thymele, and was not destined for a chorus, but contained the seats for senators and other distinguished persons, which are called *primus subselliorum ordo*.' These few words, which might perhaps be made the text for a commentary on the differing spirit of the Greek and Roman dramas, at any rate show that the day of the old chorus was passed. Where there was no orchestra, what place could there be for the variety of orchestral motion and the fulness of orchestral harmony? How could a chorus, compelled to share the stage with the actors, preserve its ancient character of military symmetry, execute the grand movement of the Parodos, and draw up in rank and file to chant the Stasimon? The traditions of the dialogue could be conveyed from country to country without injury; the traditions of choric metre and choric gesture were precisely such as were likely to perish in the attempt to transplant them, if attempt there were.

Still, great as may have been the injury sustained by the Roman drama from this humiliation of the chorus, it is one which is but imperfectly brought home to the

modern reader. Even where the whole play has been preserved, we may read it (in speaking of Seneca it would be too much to say, enjoy it) in happy unconsciousness, for the most part, of the alterations which its character must have undergone; much more when, knowing that we have to deal with fragments, we are disposed to think rather of what we find than of what we miss. The fragments preserved from the dialogue of Greek tragedy very greatly outnumber those which have survived from the choral parts; a fact for which various reasons may be adduced, such as the greater availability of the former for most purposes of quotation, especially where the quoter quotes from memory; and though it cannot be used to invalidate what we have said about the want of metrical variety in the Roman chorus, as if many metres might have existed which quotation has not preserved, it at any rate prevents the student of one set of fragments from feeling any strong sense of contrast when he turns to examine the other.

Livius Andronicus is universally acknowledged to have been the Thespis of Roman tragedy. Such a title indeed would but imperfectly express the extent of his services to the country of his adoption. With that ambidextrous activity which is especially characteristic of an imitative culture, he became also the Susarion of Roman comedy, and perhaps the Homer of Roman poetry; the latter not merely in virtue of his translation or reproduction of the 'Odyssey,' but as the first who is known to have written a poetical work, as distinguished from that popular poetry which may or may not have existed in the earlier days of the city. A native of Tarentum, taken prisoner in the Roman wars with Southern Italy, the slave, and afterwards the freed man of M. Livius Salinator, whose

children he instructed, and whose name he bore when enfranchised, he acquired the language of his conquerors perfectly, and was thus able to interpret to them the poetry of Greece, and create for them what they had hitherto been without, and perhaps had hardly felt the want of. The year 240 B.C. gives us the date of his first acted drama, but we do not know whether it was a tragedy or a comedy. The fragments of his tragedies, the names of nine of which have come down to us, amount to nearly forty lines. Like Thespis, he has had forgeries attached to his name by unscrupulous or uncritical grammarians; but he has been so far more fortunate than his prototype, that posterity is able to form a judgment of him from other data than these spurious relics. The genuine fragments, indeed, though more numerous, if not more pretentious than the forgery, are scanty enough. Of the 'Achilles'—all his tragedies appear to have been written on Greek subjects, if not actually imitated from the Greek—only one line remains, as also of the 'Ajax,' the 'Andromeda,' the 'Danae,' and the 'Hermione;' of the 'Trojan Horse,' one line and three words; of the 'Tereus,' not quite five lines. Fortune has been more kind to the 'Ægisthus,' which may consequently be allowed a longer notice. Twelve lines have been preserved, and they certainly tell us something of the conduct of the play. There was a speech by a herald or messenger, a narrative of the homeward voyage of the Grecian fleet, answering apparently to that in the 'Agamemnon' of Æschylus, while in the fulness of its details it perhaps approached more nearly to that in the 'Agamemnon' of Seneca, to which it may have supplied some hints. Like the latter, it seems to have commenced *ab ovo*,

Postquam Pergama
Accensa, et præda per participes æquiter
Divisa est,

after the burning of Troy and the partition of the booty. Like the latter, it thought it worth while to notice the gambols of the dolphins, Nereus' herd, with their flat noses, about the sides of the vessels,

Tum autem lascivum Nerei simum pecus
Ludens ad cantum classem lustratur—

a picture which seems to have been a popular one, recurring, as we shall see, in Pacuvius, and which Æschylus, at any rate, cannot be pretended to have anticipated, though some recent critics have intruded it into his description, not of the tempest in the Ægæan, but of the course of the beacon. An injunction apparently delivered by Agamemnon to his slaves, to support Cassandra, and lead her to the temple; a single line speaking of the king as engaged in solemn thanksgiving to heaven; another saying how he seated himself at the banquet, with Clytæmnestra at his side, and his daughters occupying the third place; another describing him as dashing himself to the ground in the agony of his death-wound, and an inquiry, which may have been addressed to one of his murderers, 'Jamne oculos specie lætavisti optabili?'—'Hast thou at length gladdened thy eyes with this desirable spectable?'—complete our knowledge of the play. It is worth mentioning that for all these fragments we are indebted to Nonius, who, in the exercise of his calling, quotes them not for their poetic beauty, but as authorities for the use of certain words—*æquiter*, *lustror*, *pecus*, as extending to other than quadrupeds, *proco*, *solemnitus*, *juxtim*, *fligi*, *læto*, and *species*. Similarly it is to Nonius, Paulus, and Festus that we owe the very few fragments

which are quoted from unnamed plays of his. From them we learn that he indulged, as we might have expected, in Grecisms, which the genius of the language afterwards threw off, using *anclare*, or *anculare*, for 'to draw,' and speaking of a crag in no less than four passages by the name of *ocris*; that *dusmus* in his time stood for *dusmus* or *dumosus*; and that *quisquis* included the feminine as well as the masculine; that he talked of the stony heaps, 'struices saxeas,' along which Castalia tumbles, and applied *nefrens*—a word which, according to Varro, was used of young pigs—to the toothless infant into whose mouth its mother sheds the succour of her milk.[1] These are but faint and shadowy traces, a line here and there discernible in an effaced picture; but they may have their value for those whose curiosity has ever led them, as ours before now has led us, to search Johnson's Dictionary for extracts from an old author whose works happened at that time to be beyond their reach.

[1] Mommsen quotes this line, 'Quem ego nefrendem alui lacteam immulgens opem,' as a proof of his assertion that the language of Livius is harsh and quaint. It is, however, a tolerably close rendering of Æsch. *Cho.* 897, πρὸς ᾧ σὺ πολλὰ δὴ βρίζων ἄμα Οὔλωσιν ἐξήμελξας εὐτραφὲς γάλα, and may possibly have formed part of the *Ægisthus*, if that play, as is conceivable, included the death not only of Agamemnon, but of his murderers. There is nothing in the etymology of 'nefrens' ('ne-frendere,' virtually toothless) to show that it might not have been naturally applied to an infant; nor do grammarians speak of the use as a strange one; 'lacteam opem,' too, is quite in keeping with the style of earlier Latin poetry down to Lucretius and Catullus. Nor do the few lines preserved from Livius' *Odyssey* bear out Mommsen's contemptuous expressions, or warrant Mr. Sellar in calling it bald and prosaic, as compared, that is, with the remains of other early writers. Mommsen, who extols Nævius as far more original than Ennius, denies Livius any originality; in each case passing judgment without evidence. All that can be said is that Cicero thought Livius unreadable, and that we might probably think so too if he were extant, but that his few fragments impress us in much the same manner as those of his successor. Nævius, however, ought not to be judged apart from his comic remains, which are more lively and interesting than the relics of his epic and his tragedies.

The second of the Roman tragedians in order of time was Nævius, who will come before us again in a later part of this article as the predecessor, and, to some extent at least, the rival of Ennius in epic poetry. His first play, tragedy or comedy we know not, is said to have been represented B.C. 235, five years after the example was set by Livius. Our knowledge of his tragedies is rather greater in actual extent than our knowledge of those of Livius, nearly twenty of his lines having been preserved; but as they are distinctive rather of the age than of the poet, they need scarcely detain us so long. The names of two of his plays—unfortunately they are mere names, with but one line and three isolated words to support them—the 'Clastidium,' and the 'Bringing up of Romulus and Remus,' are especially interesting as belonging to the class of *pretextæ* or *prætextatæ fabulæ*, plays on national subjects like Æschylus' 'Persians,' or Phrynichus' 'Destruction of Miletus,' or, to take an instance nearer home, the 'Histories' of Shakspeare—a class which might command our sympathies more strongly than any other species of the drama, if the data for our knowledge of it were not so scanty, or if it did not seem to have filled a comparatively small space in the minds of the Romans themselves. The rest are on Greek subjects, 'Andromache,' 'Danae,' another 'Trojan Horse,' 'Hesiona,' 'Iphigenia,' and 'Lycurgus.' Of these the most important is the last, 'Lycurgus,' the remains of which consist of more than thirty lines. The quaintness of one or two of the expressions has led Welcker to suppose it to have been a mythological comedy, like the 'Amphitruo' of Plautus; but Ribbeck, with more verisimilitude, pronounces the play to have been a tragedy, occupying probably the same ground as the lost 'Edoni' and 'Lycurgus' of Æschylus, and answering in its general effect to the 'Bacchæ' of Euripides. We see the

Bacchants, 'thyrsigeræ Bacchæ Bacchico cum schemate,' carrying crested snakes high in the air, and ruining the tilled fields—*arva* being used as a feminine noun—wherever they tread. Lycurgus seems to command his servants, 'vos qui regalis corporis custodias agitatis,' to take these disturbers of the good order of his kingdom on a hunting expedition into the forest, where trees grow of their own will, not planted, 'ingenio arbusta ubi nata sunt, non obsita;' that when they get into his hunting-grounds they may be trapped themselves, and leave the light of day, like two-legged birds, by a snare. The victims apparently suspect him, and express their fear that in the thrill and rapture of the chase, 'in venatu vitulantes,' he will send them out of his forests with some savage vengeance as their guerdon, 'pœnis decoratas feris.' Bacchus, however, is captured and brought before the king, when an altercation ensues, of which two or three fragments have been spared, Lycurgus boasting of the wrath of his savage disposition, and the fierce ferocity of his spirit, 'feri ingeni iram atque animi acrem acrimoniam,' and being warned not to set up his wrath in competition with the wrath of Liber. Further on we get a glimpse of the burning of the palace, the cross-beams far and wide all in a glow, and the whole building bursting and shining like a flower under the hand of Vulcan; and we hear a voice calling loudly for King Lycurgus, the son of Dryas. Add to these one or two graphic expressions from his other plays, as where a child is bidden by a parent to store his words in his mind, as a vintager stores the grapes in his basket, or the mountains are called places where the winds are wont to break themselves, and one or two sayings which have had the good fortune to pass into household words, though their author may have been forgotten, 'male parta male dilabuntur,' 'lætus sum laudari me abs te, patre, a

laudato vivo,' and we shall know all that for our present purpose we need to know of the tragedies of Nævius. If it does not enable us to realise the 'immense chasm' which Mommsen affects to perceive between his productions and the 'quasi-poetry of Livius,' it may at any rate save us from the temptation of flying off under the influence of an equally paradoxical reaction, and doubting whether, if we possessed the entire works of both, we should think that Nævius had made that advance on his predecessor which he must have made, supposing him not to have been essentially his inferior.

When we come to Ennius, we find the horizon of our knowledge expand. The fragments mount up to about four hundred lines, and we have better means of judging of the plays from which they are taken, thanks to the laudatory notices of his countrymen, as well as to the greater fulness of the remains themselves. All of them, with one doubtful exception, the 'Ambracia,' which some regard as a *prætexta*, others as a comedy, were on the stock subjects of Greek tragedy; some of them ascertained on external or internal evidence to have been translated or adapted from dramas now extant, such as the 'Medea,' the 'Hecuba,' and the 'Iphigenia;' others, including the 'Achilles,' the 'Achilles of Aristarchus,' the 'Ajax,' the 'Alcumæo,' the 'Alexander,' the 'Andromacha Æchmalotis,' the 'Andromeda,' the 'Athamas,' the 'Cresphontes,' the 'Erechtheus,' the 'Eumenides,' the 'Ransoming of Hector' (Hectoris Lustra), the 'Medea at Athens,' the 'Melanippe,' the 'Phœnix,' the 'Telamo,' the 'Telephus,' and the 'Thyestes,' easily connected with Greek originals, surviving or lost, by a more or less plausible conjecture. 'Who is there,' asks Cicero, 'such an enemy, I might almost say to the Roman name, as to reject or slight the "Medea" of Ennius, or the "Antiopa" of Pacuvius, because he takes

pleasure in reading their originals in Euripides?' The appeal to patriotic feeling may pass lightly by a modern critic: still, there is an interest in seeing how the old Romans attempted to render in their rough barbarian tongue the productions of the most polished age of Athens —an interest like that which we may feel in taking up a translation of the 'Æneid' by a writer of Queen Mary's day, or a version of the 'Pharsalia' by a poet of the Commonwealth. The opening lines of Ennius's 'Medea' (they may be found, along with their Greek original, either in Mommsen or in Mr. Sellar) are abundantly characteristic. Euripides, very naturally, makes his nurse first wish that the Argo had never passed the Symplegades, and then, wandering back, wish that the timber for the oars had never been cut down. This artful inartificiality lay apparently too deep for the old Roman; he knew that the cutting down of the timber was really an entire link in the chain of causation, and to talk about it late, doubtless seemed to him a mere piece of poetical refinement, so he chose to begin *ab ovo*. So there is great *naïveté* in the way in which he introduces the Argo, explaining, for the benefit of his countrymen, much in the style of an early commentator or scholiast, that she was a vessel bearing that name, and even taking the opportunity of imparting a scrap of etymological information: 'Argo, so called from the eminent Argives, who sailed in her.' The same vein of rude formality, varied occasionally by some quaint and forcible expression, runs through the other fragments of the play, as when he turns the simple Κορινθίαι γυναῖκες into 'Quæ Corinthum arcem altam habetis, matronæ opulentæ, optimates,' or where Medea is made to say that this day Creon has put into her hands the bolts and bars, and enabled her to let loose her wrath—

Ille transversa mente mihi hodie tradidit repagula,
Quibus ego iram omnem recludam, atque illi perniciem dabo;
Mihi mœrores, illi luctum, exitium illi, exilium mihi.

Another fragment, containing the opening of the last choral ode of the play, is interesting, as apparently affording an instance of what we remarked a few pages back, the absence of any attempt to imitate the complexity of the Greek choric metres :—

Juppiter, tuque adeo summe Sol, qui omnes res inspicis,
Quique lumine tuo maria, terram, cælum contines,
Inspice hoc facinus priusquam fiat, prohibessis scelus.

Here the uncertainty of the text prevents our speaking with confidence: but the matter appears to be only the ordinary trochaic of the tragic dialogue. Of the fragments of Ennius's remaining tragedies, the most considerable and important are those which belong, by assumption or by acknowledged title, to the 'Alexander' and the 'Andromacha Æchmalotis.' We know but little of the structure of either play, except that both formed parts of the tale of Troy, the scene of the first being apparently laid during the siege, that of the second during the capture. The first is supposed to have contained that memorable speech of Cassandra, which, in whole or in part, is more than once quoted by Cicero. 'Why does madness flash from thine eye?' asks Hecuba of her daughter: 'Where is thy maiden modesty?'

Sed quid oculis rabere visa es derepente ardentibus?
Ubi illa tua paulo ante sapiens virginalis modestia?

We know the Cassandra of Æschylus: let us hear the Cassandra of Ennius :—

Mater, optumarum multo melior mulier mulierum,
Missa sum superstitiosis ariolationibus:
Namque Apollo fatis fandis dementem invitam ciet.

Virgines æquales vereor, patris mei meum factum pudet,
Optumi viri. Mea mater, tui me miseret, mei piget.
Optumam progeniem Priamo peperisti extra me: hoc dolet:
Me obesse, illos prodesse, me obstare, illos obsequi!

And then, in the midst of her self-denunciation, the prophetic frenzy comes upon her; she sees the blood-red firebrand which symbolised her brother's birth, and calls on the Trojans to quench it:—

Adest, adest fax obvoluta sanguine atque incendio!
Multos annos latuit: cives, ferte opem et restinguite!
Iamque mari magno classis cita
Texitur: exitium examen rapit:
Advenit, et fera velivolantibus
Navibus complevit manus litora.

A later fragment, probably from the same speech, has been copied by Virgil in the Sixth Book of the 'Æneid,' as it is itself doubtless copied from a passage in the 'Agamemnon:'—

Nam maxumo saltu superabit gravidus armatis equus
. . . . qui suo partu ardua perdat Pergama.

So the address of Æneas to the visionary Hector is taken almost verbally from a speech in which one of the sons or daughters of the royal house apostrophises the dead body:—

O lux Trojæ, germane Hector!
. . . . quid te ita contuo lacerato corpore,
Miser, aut qui te sic tractavere nobis respectantibus?

The longest and most noticeable fragment of the 'Andromacha' is in the same strain. The discrowned princess, widowed wife, and bereaved mother, is recounting what she has had to witness:—

Quid petam præsidi, aut exequar? quove nunc
Auxilio aut exili aut fugæ freta sim?

Arce et urbe orba sum. Quo accedam? quo applicem?
Quoi nec aræ patriæ domi stant, fractæ et disjectæ jacent,
Fana flamma deflagrata, tosti alti stant parietes,
Deformati, atque abiete crispa.
O pater, O patria, O Priami domus,
Sæptum altisono cardine templum!
Vidi te, astante ope barbarica,
Tectis cælatis, lacuatis,
Auro, ebore instructum regifice.
Hæc omnia vidi inflammari,
Priamo vi vitam evitari,
Jovis aram sanguine turpari.

. . . . . .

Vidi, videre quod sum passa ægerrume,
Hectorem curru quadrijugo raptarier,
Hectoris natum de muro jactarier.

It is to these latter lines that the present Archbishop of Dublin, in his work on Sacred Latin Poetry, refers for the support of a theory that something like rhyme existed in the early poetry of Rome. Expressed in more general terms, the view may perhaps be thought to receive confirmation not only from this passage, but from others which we have quoted. These old fragments contain many instances of similarity of sound, not only in the ending but in the beginning of words, sometimes confined to alliteration, sometimes passing into a jingle. Precisely the same thing occurs in Plautus, who abounds in jingles, not amounting to puns, or even to plays on words. The first rude attempts at producing rhythmical symmetry of language coincide with the first rude attempts at producing verbal wit. In their maturity they diverge widely; in their infancy they seem closely to approximate.

We now come to two names which are probably the greatest in the muster-roll of Roman tragic poets. Cicero, indeed, seems to have felt as high an admiration for Ennius as for his successors: but a reader of Horace

would infer that the enthusiasm of Roman critics and Roman audiences was chiefly centred on Pacuvius and Attius. Yet in the case of M. Pacuvius, at any rate, we appear to be stepping back from comparative light into comparative obscurity. The aggregate of his dramatic remains, it is true, is somewhat larger than that of Ennius's: but they consist chiefly of single lines, and so give us but little opportunity of judging for ourselves of his poetical characteristics. Meantime, one or two facts of his personal history are worth a passing notice. His life, which was a long one, falls between the years 220 and 130 B.C. He was connected with Ennius not merely by poetical relationship, but by the ties of blood, being, according to the most probable accounts, his sister's son, and about twenty years his junior. In temperament as in genius, he appears to have been a kind of Roman Sophocles, εὔκολὸς μὲν ἐνθάδ', εὔκολος δ' ἐκεῖ. He took charge of his great kinsman's funeral; and many years later, when he had himself retired from the scenes of his fame, to pass his old age in his native Brundisium, his house and heart were open to his young rival Attius, with whom he used, as we shall see below, to converse freely on the subject of their common pursuit. Though he had attained renown not only as a poet, but as the painter of a picture esteemed only second to the great masterpiece of Fabius Pictor, he took leave of the world in an epitaph which, in its graceful modesty, is singularly contrasted with the arrogant self-assertion of his brother poets, simply asking the youthful reader to stop and read his memorial stone. After catching this brief glimpse of the man, it is mortifying to find that our knowledge of his works is so scanty, that we cannot judge whether Varro is right in quoting his style as an instance of luxuriance, or Fronto, in a later day, in characterising it as a uniform level; what

are the grounds on which Cicero charged him with speaking bad Latin in an age when, as he says, a good style came to men by a sort of unconscious innocence; or in what respect he deserved the ambiguous epithet 'doctus' applied to him, whether from his acquaintance with Greek, or from his acquaintance with his art, by the connoisseurs not only of Horace's time, but of Quintilian's.[1] His plays, so far as their names have come down to us, amount to thirteen, the 'Antiopa,' the 'Judgment of the Arms of Achilles,' the 'Atalanta,' the 'Chryses,' the 'Dulorestes,' the 'Hermiona,' the 'Iliona,' the 'Medus,' the 'Niptra' or 'Ablutions,' a story partly taken from the 'Odyssey,' the 'Pentheus,' the 'Peribœa,' and the 'Teucer,' together with a *prætexta* named 'Paulus,' the subject of which is conjectured to have been the Battle of Cannæ. Those of our readers who may happen to be familiar with the fragments of Attic tragedy, will see that each of these plays, with the exception, of course, of the last, must have had a Greek prototype, after which it was probably framed. But the remains themselves, as we have just intimated, exist in too small portions to give us any sufficient notion of the manner in which the stories were treated, or even of their own poetical value, considered merely as isolated passages. Like the remains of Livius and Nævius, they are in fact not so much fragments as dust. Yet even there, perhaps, we may find something of interest, if we single out four of these dramas from the rest. We have already alluded to the warm eulogium which Cicero more than once passes on the 'Antiopa;' but it should not be forgotten that there was another Roman writer who looked upon that work of ancient art

[1] As usual, Mommsen discriminates him from Ennius, pronouncing that though he 'polished more carefully, and aspired to a higher strain,' 'his language appears more rugged, his style of composition pompous and punctilious.'

with very different eyes. It is on its unfortunate heroine, and the sorrows whose pressure bolsters up her doleful heart, that Persius vaunts the disgust which he feels at the revival of a taste for obsolete poetry by the *dilettanti* of his day; and the very deformities, the warts and ulcers, which she is supposed to have contracted in the course of her unwholesome captivity, are used to symbolise the quaintnesses of language which are considered to disfigure the style of the old poet. This diversity of judgment, however, tells us nothing about the character of the play; it merely indicates a diversity of taste among the judges, just as the same peculiar features which repel one reader of our own Elizabethan drama attract another. Of the fragments themselves, the most noticeable is one quoted, though not *in extenso*, by Cicero, in the second book of the 'De Divinatione,' as an instance of the obscurity with which a plain thing can be invested. Amphion is speaking of a quadruped: slow-footed, field-loving, low of stature, rough of skin, with a short head, a snake's neck, a fierce look, with no entrails, and no animal life, and yet with an animal's voice. The chorus of citizens tell him that he has guarded his meaning with so strong a force of language, 'ita sæptuosa dictione,' as effectually to exclude conjecture, and that if he would be understood he must speak plainly. He then utters the name *tortoise*. 'Why should not the harper have called it a tortoise at once, instead of making such a mystery of it?' asks Cicero impatiently. Where we have so few data, it would be hazardous to attempt to answer the question; but the passage seems to be not a mere piece of circumlocution, but a riddle, like that of the Sphinx, Amphion describing his tortoise-shell lyre, not very consistently, partly by the properties of the lion tortoise, partly as what it is when, in the language of Shelley's version of Homer's 'Hymn to

Mercury,' 'the life and soul have been bored out of the beast,' and it has been 'made to sing.' There is, in fact, something in the humour with which the thought is played with, which may remind us, as it was perhaps intended to do, of the Homeric Hermes when he first views the tortoise :—

A useful godsend are you to me now,
King of the dance, companion of the feast,
Lovely in all your nature! Welcome you
Excellent plaything! where, sweet mountain beast,
Got you that speckled shell? Thus much I know,
You must come home with me and be my guest:
You will give joy to me, and I will do
All that is in my power to honour you.
Better to be at home than out-of-door:
So come with me; and though it has been said
That you alive defend from magic power,
I know you will sing sweetly when you're dead.

This parallel may console us for the utter absence of anything salient in the few other remains of this once celebrated play. The only one which calls for even a passing notice is a line containing the expression 'flori crines,' locks of bright bloomy hue, a reading which, if the authority of Probus the grammarian is to be held paramount, ought to take its place in a passage in the Twelfth Book of the 'Æneid,' where we now read of the yellow hair, *flori crines*, of the fair Lavinia. We pass on to two plays which appear to have been connected in subject, the 'Dulorestes' and the 'Chryses.' The title of the former play, which seems to have been afterwards borrowed by Varro for one of his 'Saturæ Menippeæ,' 'Agatho Dulorestes,' is still a perplexity to critics, who cannot decide between Δολορέστης and Δουλορέστης, Orestes practising a strategem on Thoas, and Orestes

appearing, on some unspecified occasion, in the character of a slave. The subject of the play was the same as that of the 'Iphigenia in Tauris:' the brother and his friend come to the Chersonese, where the sister is priestess, and instead of being offered up by her as human sacrifices, persuade her to elude her master and return with them. Cicero more than once mentions the tumultuous applause which invariably arose in the theatre during the thrilling scene when the king has the two friends in his power, but cannot tell which is Orestes, his intended victim, and each asserts, drowning as it were the other's voice, that he is the man; till at last, neither being able to prevail, they entreat to be put to death together. 'It was a mere histrionic fiction,' says he, 'yet the audience rose to their feet and clapped.' With that exception, the remnants of the play are quotations for mere lexicographical purposes, made by Nonius, Festus, and Priscian, illustrating the use of such words as *orbitudo*, *vanitudo*, *prolixitudo*, *temeritudo*, *fatiscor* for *fatisco*, and *adjutor* for *adjuto*. The only one to which we now refer is one of several passages, in which the Roman writers as it were turn commentators on their own language, and explain the difference between *pigere* and *pudere*: 'Piget paternum nomen, maternum pudet profari:' 'My father's name I cannot tell for sorrow, my mother's for shame.' The 'Chryses' was a sequel to the 'Dulorestes,' and on the Greek stage would doubtless have formed part of the same tetralogy. The play was probably modelled on a lost work of Sophocles, bearing the same name; the story seems to have been preserved by Hyginus. The fugitives, escaping from the Tauric Chersonese, take refuge in the Isle of Chryse, known to all readers of the First Iliad, as the home of the priest Chryses. Thither they are pursued by Thoas, who requires their surrender.

But they have found a friend who can help them. Chryseïs, so runs the post-Homeric legend, after her return to her father, was delivered of a son, who received his grandfather's name, and was brought up as the child of Apollo. He assists his new relatives against their enemy, and Thoas is killed. Yet here, as elsewhere, the fragments help us but little towards the story. The most memorable are one or two preserved by Cicero, on the subject of divination and physical philosophy; taken, it has been conjectured, from a dialogue between Orestes and the elder Chryses. One of these is a sneer at augury, such as the old poets were fond of indulging, the point being, that those who learn more from the inwards of others than from their own, ought to be heard rather than heeded:—

> Isti qui linguam avium intelligunt
> Plusque ex alieno jecore sapiunt quam ex suo,
> Magis audiendum quem auscultandum censeo.

Another speaks of the all-embracing sky as the source of all being:—

> Hoc vide, circum supraque quod complexu continet
> Terram
> Solisque exortu capessit candorem, occasu nigret,
> Id quod nostri cælum memorant, Graii perhibent æthera:
> Quidquid est hoc, omnia animat, format, alit, auget, creat,
> Sepelit, recipit in sese omnia, omniumque idem est pater,
> Indidemque eadem quæ oriuntur, de integro æque eodem incidunt.

The last play we shall notice, the 'Niptra,' contains, as we have said, part of the history of Ulysses. It appears partly to have coincided with the end of the 'Odyssey,' partly to have carried on the narrative further. Like the 'Chryses,' it had its origin in a drama of Sophocles, the second title of which, Ὀδυσσεὺς ἀκανθοπλήξ, points

to the post-Homèric part of the story. Ulysses arrives at his home, as in Homer, and is recognised by his nurse as she assists him in the bath. In lines which Gellius justly characterises as delightful, she invites the stranger to submit to those offices which she had so often paid to her old master :—

Cedo tamen pedem tuum lymphis flavis, flavum ut pulverem
Manibus isdem, quibus Ulyssi sæpe permulsi, abluam;
Lassitudinemque minuam manuum mollitudine.

We may wonder at the notion of colour which chooses the same word, *flavus*—a mixture, so Fronto in Gellius lays down, of green, red, and white—to represent both the hue of the water that cleanses, and that of the dust that is cleansed, but it can be no surprise to us that the passage should have been thought graceful and pleasing. Another line apparently tells of the qualities which enable Euryclea to identify the wanderer with Ulysses :—

Lenitudo orationis, mollitudo corporis.

Afterwards, through what steps we know not, the story changes. Telegonus, the son of Ulysses by Circe, comes to Ithaca to seek his father, and wounds him ignorantly in a chance encounter, with a spear barbed with a fish-bone. 'He met our lance,' cries the wounded hero, 'with a noxious barbaric weapon, made of a strange shape, and put together by no skilful hand.' In the rest of the play we hear the complaints of the sufferer in his agony, reminding us of those of his old enemy Philoctetes, or of Hercules in the 'Trachiniæ.' 'Take me up gently,' he says,

Pedetentim ac sedato nisu,
Ne succussu arripiat major
Dolor.

And then, as the pain masters him, he shrieks aloud, and begs to be left alone:—

Retinete, tenete! opprimite ulcus,
Nudate! heu miserum me, excrucior!
Operite, abscedite jamjam.
Mittite: nam attrectatu et quassu
Sævum amplificatis dolorem.

Elsewhere, however, he rises superior to his anguish, observing, when he is dying, that complaint is the natural utterance for a man, lamentation for a woman; a contrast, Cicero seems to say, to the hero of Sophocles, whose exclamations were less manly, or at any rate were not met by the chorus in the same spirit of stoical reproof.

The fragments of Pacuvius's nameless plays, though not numerous, contain two passages of greater length than any that are to be found among his other remains. We will only quote one of them, the description of the Greeks on their voyage home from Troy, to which we alluded in speaking of Livius. At first they amuse themselves with looking at the fish that sport about the vessel; but a storm soon gathers:

Profectione læti piscium lasciviam
Intuentur, nec tuendi capere satietas potest.
Interea prope jam occidente sole inhorrescit mare,
Tenebræ conduplicantur, noctisque et nimbum occæcat nigror,
Flamma inter nubes coruscat, cœlum tonitru contremit,
Undique omnes venti erumpunt, sævi existunt turbines,
Fervit æstu pelagus.

But it is time to hasten to the last name on our list.

Of the life of L. Attius we know less than that of his predecessor, though he belonged to the next generation,

the date of his birth being B.C. 170, and survived into the days of Cicero, who, as a young man, frequently conversed with him. As a compensation for this slenderness of information, however, we have a clearer view of his labours as an author, which appear to have been nearly as various as those of Ennius, including not only tragedies and *prætextæ*, but a historical epic like Ennius's, with the same title, 'Annales,' and three prose works, 'Libri Didascalion,' apparently a history of poetry, 'Libri Pragmaticon,' and 'Parerga.' So, when we come to his actual remains, we find that, as far at least as mere quantity goes, time has dealt more kindly with him than with his brethren, sparing us very nearly seven hundred lines. It is in his relics alone that we find any considerable fragment of a *prætexta*. He is known to have written at least two plays of that description, the 'Æneadæ' or 'Decius,' and the 'Brutus,' the subject of the last being the elder Brutus, the hero of the Regifuge, though it is possible, as has been suggested, that he may have intended to compliment another of the family, D. Brutus, his own friend and patron. From the 'Brutus' Cicero has extracted two speeches, one of King Tarquin recounting an alarming dream, the other of the soothsayer giving the explanation. The king has dreamed of a flock of sheep, from which he chose two rams for sacrifice. He had slain one, when the other ran at him, and butted him to the ground, and as he lay there wounded, he saw the sun change his course and move from left to right. This he tells in iambics; the answer is in trochaics, and is not without interest, philosophical as well as poetical, attempting, as it does, to give some sort of theory of dreams, which are said to arise generally from natural causes, but which in some cases are supernatural:—

Rex, quæ in vita usurpant homines, cogitant, curant, vident,
Quæque agunt vigilantes agitantque, ea si cui in somno accidunt,
Minus mirum est; sed di rem tantam haud temere improviso offerunt.
Proin vide, ne quem tu esse hebetem deputes æque ac pecus,
Is sapientia munitum pectus egregie gerat
Teque regno expellat: nam id quod de sole ostentum est tibi,
Populo commutationem rerum portendit tibi,
Perpropinquam. Hæc bene verruncent populo! Nam quod dexterum
Cepit cursum ab læva signum præpotens, pulcherrime
Auguratum est rem Romanam publicam summam fore.

A curious story, whether authentic or no, is preserved by Gellius, showing Attius's opinion of the character of his own genius. We give it as translated by Mr. Sellar:—'When Pacuvius, at a great age, and suffering from a disease of long standing, had retired from Rome to Tarentum, Attius, at that time a considerably younger man, on his journey to Asia, arrived at that town, and stayed with Pacuvius. And being kindly entertained, and constrained to stay for several days, he read to him, at his request, his tragedy of "Atreus." Then, as the story goes, Pacuvius said that what he had written appeared to him sonorous and elevated, but somewhat harsh and crude. "It is just as you say," replied Attius; "and in truth I am not sorry for it, for I hope that I shall write better in future; for they say that the same law holds good in genius as in fruit. Fruits which are originally harsh and sour afterwards become mellow and pleasant, but those which have a soft and withered look, and are very juicy at first, become soon rotten without ever becoming ripe. It appears, accordingly, that there should be left something in genius also for the mellowing influence of years and time."'

It would be interesting if we could verify this piece of self-criticism by an appeal to Attius's writings, and see whether his somewhat complacent anticipation can take rank as a fulfilled prediction. Here, however, as elsewhere, the state of our knowledge leaves us quite at fault. The names of no less than forty-five of his tragedies have been preserved—a number which, even if reduced, as a searching criticism would perhaps reduce it, by ten, will still be very considerable; but, except from Gellius' story, we appear to have no external means of ascertaining the time at which any of them were composed, and the remains themselves are not sufficiently speaking to give any evidence of their own age or youthfulness. We question, indeed—and here we are glad to find ourselves in agreement with Mr. Sellar—whether, to a modern apprehension, there is any sensible distinction between the style of Attius and his predecessor and critic; whether to one whose eyes were bandaged, the harsh fruit would not taste merely the same as the mellow; though Mommsen, of course, finds Attius's imitations 'more readable and adroit.' Each individual, doubtless, had critical stages in his own poetical life; each individual, doubtless, stood in some marked relation to his predecessors and successors, and to the other poets of his age. But at the point of view which we occupy, these minor differences between writer and writer, much more between a writer and himself, are no longer perceptible. Distance has done much to confound them; mediæval oblivion has all but swept away their very data. To us the old tragic poets are themselves but a single critical stage in the poetical life of their nation; their productions, one and all, impregnated by the same flavour of harshness, which was to find its season of mellowing, not in the lifetime of any one of

themselves, but in the ripe period of the Roman mind—the Augustan era of Horace and Virgil.

But though we cannot compare the 'Atreus' of Attius with its younger brothers and sisters, we have a few glimmering lights which show us something of what it was in itself. The savage nature of the hero is dwelt on again and again by Cicero, with whom he is a type of imperious cruelty—the gloomy tyrant of the Roman stage. We are admitted to his confidence, and hear his plans of vengeance against his brother, who has once more roused the sleeping tiger within him :—

> Iterum Thyestes Atreum adtractatum advenit,
> Iterum jam aggreditur me et quietum exsuscitat:
> Major mihi moles, majus miscendum est malum,
> Qui illius acerbum cor contundam et comprimam.

The same or a similar speech contained the words which, by frequent quotation, have passed into a proverb, 'Oderint dum metuant'—a sentiment which, says Seneca, fathers itself at once on a contemporary of Sulla, but which may also remind a modern reader of times nearer to Seneca's own. But we are not left to think of Atreus as a mere monster of cruelty; we are bidden to recollect that he is a man who has been deeply wronged as a brother, a husband, and a king. He speaks of Thyestes as one who was not content with seducing his wife; he lays stress on the adultery itself, as a crime especially perilous in high places, and on the public evil to be apprehended from any tampering with the royal stock; and he shows that his throne was menaced by the adulterous pair, who stole from him the golden lamb, the heaven-sent Palladium of the kingdon. On the other side we have the thoughts of Thyestes, by his own showing, at least, even then a man more sinned against

than sinning, who by a stroke of tragic irony is represented as warning his children of the many snares that are laid for the good, and of the danger to a private man of sitting at meat with a king. We catch a glimpse of the bloody preparations for the feast; we hear the floor of heaven shaken with a sudden thunder-peal, 'tonitru turbida torvo;' Atreus tells the wretched father that he is himself his children's grave, and retorts the charge of broken faith by saying that there is no faith with the faithless; and then we listen to Thyestes as he recurs to the monstrous horror of the situation, a brother inducing a father to close his teeth on the flesh of his own sons, and asks what hope for the future there can be for one so steeped in pollution as himself:—

Egone Argivum imperium attingam aut Pelopia dignef domo?
Quo me ostendam? quod templum adeam? quem ore funesto
alloquar?

Out of the remaining forty-four plays of Attius, we can afford only to pick an isolated fragment here and there.

Here is a specimen of that grammarian spirit which we have noted once or twice already in his predecessors, the spirit of men who feel themselves to be not only poets but writers, endeavouring to inform the heads of their countrymen as well as to move their hearts. Achilles is lecturing Antilochus on the difference between 'pervicacia' and 'pertinacia:'—

Tu pertinaciam esse, Antiloche, hanc prædicas:
Ego pervicaciam aio, et ea me uti volo:
Nam pervicacem dici me esse et vincere (vincier?)
Perfacile patior, pertinacem nil moror:
Hæc fortes sequitur, illam indocti possident.
Tu addis quod vitio est, demis quod laudi datur.

In a single line we are told how to distinguish 'animus' and 'anima:'—

Sapimus animo, fruimur anima: sine animo anima est debilis.

Here is a picture of the Argo, the first ship, drawn by a shepherd who has seen it from a mountain:—

Tanta moles labitur
Fremebunda ex alto, ingenti sonitu et spiritu.
Præ se undas volvit, vortices vi suscitat:
Ruit prolapsa, pelagus respergit, reflat.
Ita dum interruptum credas nimbum labier,
Dum quod sublime ventis expulsum rapi
Saxum, aut procellis, vel globosos turbines
Existere ictos undis concursantibus:
Nisi quas terrestris pontus strages conciet;
Aut forte Triton fuscina evertens specus
Subter radices penitus undanti in freto
Molem ex profundo saxeam in cælum eruit.

The four following lines describe daybreak and its occupations with a circumstantial minuteness which in a modern poet would be tedious and ungraceful, but in Attius is merely characteristic of antique simplicity:—

Forte ante auroram, radiorum ardentum indicem,
Cum e somno in segetem agrestes cornutos cient,
Ut rorulentas terras ferro rufidas
Proscindant, glebas molli ex arvo exsuscitent.

Lastly, here are some anapæsts from the 'Philoctetes,' the first passage, an address to Ulysses, the second, part of a description of Lemnos, the island of Vulcan:—

Inclute, parva prodite patria,
Nomine celebri claroque potens
Pectore, Achivis classibus auctor,
Gravis Dardaniis gentibus ultor,
Laertiade!

Nemus expirante vapore vides,
Unde ignis cluet mortalibus clam
Divisus; eum dictus Prometheus
Clepsisse dolo, pœnasque levi
Fato expendisse supremo.

In taking leave of these old tragedies, we will say a very few words on one point to which we have not yet adverted, the metre of the dialogue.

So far as we can follow Horace's not very intelligible account of the iambic trimeter, it would appear that he regarded it as having been gradually encroached upon by spondees, which, having been duly admitted into the first, third, and fifth of the six places in the verse, pushed their inroads further, so as to take possession of all but the last. Such a representation would not be true of the Greek iambic, which found no difficulty in keeping the spondees within bounds, though in the hands of the comic writers it was overrun by anapæsts; but it may, perhaps, stand if we place together the experience of one language with the experience of another. Under the Romans, spondees seem to have asserted their title to the first five places of the trimeter from the very outset, and the result of the progress of tragic versification was not to extend (if indeed extension had been possible), but to contract their province, and to re-establish the Greek type substantially as it had existed in the days of Euripides. Perhaps it might be too much to say, that the iambic trimeter and trochaic tetrameter of early Roman tragedy are absolutely identical with those of Roman comedy; yet they bear a strong resemblance to each other, not only as regards the nature of the fact admitted, but in the licenses of pronunciation allowed. Some of the lines which we quoted a short time back, 'Cedo tamen pedem tuum lymphis flavis, flavum ut

pulverem,' for instance, can only be received by an application of the Plautine and Terentian license, which makes 'meus,' 'tuus,' &c., monosyllables. The elision of the final 's,' though, of course, not peculiar to early dramatic poetry, points to the same thing, the assimilation of poetical recitations in those times to the ordinary pronunciation. The early Roman writers had doubtless no wish to confound tragedy and comedy, though they themselves produced either indifferently; they were not likely to have dreamed of the approximation between the two, which we mentioned at the opening of our remarks as having gradually taken place in Greece; but the accidents of their age and position led them unconsciously in the same direction, and their own imperfection as workmen prevented them from perceiving critically where they did not feel intuitively. Euripides, the chief agent in what may be called the secularisation of Greek tragedy, ventured on one occasion to break through the courtesies of scenic illusion, which ignore the spectators, and to make a tragic chorus address the audience in the name of the author of the play, after the manner of its comic counterpart. May we not recognise the same tendency in the custom which, as we learn from Horace and Quintilian, prevailed on the Roman stage, of closing tragedy and comedy alike with the emphatic *Plaudite*?

We must now return to Ennius, by far the greater part of our debt to whom still remains unpaid. As a tragedian he is only one among several, and not the greatest of the number: as an epic poet he filled a place in the minds of his countrymen somewhat analogous to, though of course not commensurate with, that occupied in Greece by Homer himself. However modern critics may adjust precedence among writers whose works they

have not read, there can be no question that he was generally regarded by the Romans as the true founder of their national poetry, 'the morning-star of song.' Those who went before him he himself relegates to a period when poetry had not yet been conceived of as an art, 'when no one had scaled the crags of the Muses, or was studious of speech;' and no attempt seems to have been seriously made to disturb his verdict. Cicero, perhaps the only ancient writer from whom a word can be quoted in favour of Nævius as against his rival, is the one whose voice is raised most consistently and emphatically to eulogise Ennius, our Ennius, the first of epic poets; the man who celebrated our great ancestors, and whom they in turn delighted to honour. The title of the second Homer, instanced by Horace as a specimen of the criticism of his time upon Ennius, is a witness to the admiration entertained for him by Lucilius. Lucretius, standing on the threshold of his own great poem, speaks of Ennius as the first who brought from Helicon a garland of unfading leaf to be had in renown among the nations of Italy, and in questioning his doctrines declares the verses in which they are enshrined to be eternal. Propertius contrasts his own luxuriant ivy with the austere laurels of Ennius; but such language is no more than he bestows generally on writers whose subjects and mode of treatment were severer than his own: and he elsewhere tells of himself as having drunk at the same spring with the father of verse, who rose from that draught to sing of the Curii and Horatii, of the trophies of Æmilius and the delays of Fabius, of the blow received at Cannæ, and the bowing of the will of heaven by prayer, of the Lares that put Hannibal to flight, and the geese that saved Capitolian Jove. Ovid and Horace, while impelled by a spirit perhaps of rivalry, perhaps

only of reasonable self-assertion, to contend that the old bard's poems had no right to be regarded as the consummation of Roman art, are nevertheless not unwilling to pay the homage demanded by so great a name, the one conceding to the man of genius what he denies to the artist, the other, in a passage whose apparent historical inaccuracy has been a standing difficulty to criticism, affirming that the fame of the African conqueror is due not more to the burning of Carthage than to the muses of Calabria. And though the sneer of Martial at those who would read Ennius when they could read Virgil, shows that the feud between the old and the new was not confined to the Augustan age, we find that even in the time of Gellius, an itinerant lecturer on Ennius, an 'Ennianista,' as he called himself, after the manner of the Homeristæ, could command an audience, and that a copy of the 'Annals,' of accredited authority, was procured at great expense, for the purpose of verifying the reading of a single line. With such a chain of testimonials before him, a scholar may be excused if he takes up the language of Scaliger, and complains, like Priam, of the fortune of war which has destroyed the hero of the family, and left so many of his less noble brethren. We feel that for us the great year of Roman poetry has lost its spring; and some sense of our loss remains with us as we gaze on the meridian glow of its fervid summer, or the hectic tints of its decaying autumn.

Before we speak of the author and of the remains of his works, the history of those remains deserves a few words of notice. It is mortifying to think that a copy of the poems of Ennius appears to have existed till within a comparatively recent period. We cannot indeed point to the precise part of the ocean where the vessel

went down, but we know where she was last spoken with. A catalogue of the date of the thirteenth century, appended to a MS. of Statius in a library at Prague, mentions copies of Ennius and Nævius; and a poet of the same period, Alanus de Insula, a Scotchman, in his 'Anti-Claudianus,' talks of Ennius in his ragged plebeian garb, thundering out the fortunes of Priam, as if his knowledge of the old bard rested on something better than hearsay. It was an age when classical taste, which had begun to show signs of life, again became nearly extinct, the thick darkness which set in before the dawn; and that it should willingly have let die an author whom of all others Cicero would have struggled to save, is only a single charge towards its condemnation. At the revival of learning we hear only of the fragments of Ennius; they began, however, to attract attention early in the sixteenth century; and Ludovicus Vives, the eminent Spaniard who taught Latin at Oxford, announced a purpose of collecting and editing them. The first who actually performed that task were Robert and Henry Stephens, in their collection of the 'Fragments of the Ancient Latin Poets,' published at Paris in 1564. Thirty-six years later, a more elaborate edition was brought out by an Italian, Hieronymus Columna, whose industry as a collector of the fragments appears to have been sufficiently praiseworthy, though unfortunately not equalled by his sagacity in restoring their text or assigning to them their probable places in the lost poems. The next adventure was at once more ambitious and less respectable. Advantage was taken of the name of Ennius to propagate a daring and ingenious forgery. In 1595, Paulus Merula, a Dutch jurisconsult, published at Leyden the fragments of Ennius's 'Annals' in a corrected, rearranged, and enlarged form, the main feature of his edition consisting of

some additional remains, recovered, as he professed, from a treatise by L. Calpurnius Piso, addressed to the Emperor Trajan, 'On the Contents (continentia) of the Ancient Poets.' This valuable repertory of quotations had been examined by him, according to his statement, in the library of St. Victor at Paris, where it had once formed part of the same volume with a MS. of Lucan, but had afterwards been separated from it; and now, he declared, it was in great danger of being stolen. On examination, it appeared that the probability had become a certainty; Piso's treatise had vanished, while the mutilated volume remained; and the latter part of the discovery at any rate has apparently been accepted, even by some recent critics, as an evidence of the general truth of the story, though, when rigorously examined, it seems not to be worth much more than the attestation of the bricks in the chimney to Jack Cade's account of his parentage. Modern opinion appears to have decided that Merula's anticipation was a prediction after the fact, and that he was really both his own Piso and his own Ennius; at the same time that we must confess with Niebuhr that the forgery is executed with considerable plausibility, and that the verses, if not such as Ennius must have written, are such as he might have written. After Merula, we find no name of any great importance, real or fictitious, among the editors of Ennius, till we come to Vahlen, whose edition we have already commemorated, and are glad once more to recommend to our readers for carefulness in collecting the fragments, labour in ascertaining their text according to the best MSS. of the various authors who have preserved them, and general good judgment in arranging them in their places and establishing the main outlines of the lost work. Our own obligations to it have been very great,

and the sketch which we are about to give of the probable form and contents of Ennius's poems will be made up, we may say, exclusively from its materials.

First, however, we must briefly sketch the chief particulars that are known about the poet himself. The authorities for his history are rather various than copious; the fullest and in every way the most satisfactory being Cicero, whose notices have to be supplemented by the more equivocal testimony of later compilers, grammatical or historical.

Q. Ennius was born in the year B.C. 239, in the consulship of C. Mamilius Turrinus and Q. Valerius Falto, the year after poetry, as Cicero expresses it, had been introduced into Rome by the representations of the first drama of Livius Andronicus. His place of birth was Rudiæ (not Rudia), a village in the Calabrian hills; a fact established by the more or less distinct witness of various authors, including his own, as against Eusebius, who makes him to have been born at Tarentum. Calabria was formerly known as Messapia; and Ennius used to assert his descent from the eponymous hero Messapus, the 'Messapus equum domitor' of Virgil, who is said by Servius to have alluded to this claim in the passage of the Seventh Book of the 'Æneid' (vv. 698 foll.), where he introduces the followers of Messapus singing of their king as they marched, like long-necked swans. Silius Italicus represents him as serving in Sardinia under Manlius Torquatus, against the combined army of Sardinians and Carthaginians, at a time when he must have been about four-and-twenty; and, though the circumstances of the description are doubtless wholly due to that frigid imitator of Virgil, that seems no reason why the nucleus round which they cluster may not have been derived from a tradition of whatever value. Fifteen or twenty years

later he appears to have been still in Sardinia, if we may trust the shadowy and somewhat conflicting authorities of Cornelius Nepos and Aurelius Victor, from which we gather that he then became connected with Cato, whether during Cato's African quæstorship or Sicilian prætorship is not clear, and was brought by him to Rome. In his fifty-first year we find him attached to another eminent man, Fulvius Nobilior, who took him with him on his Ætolian campaign, and afterwards marked his recollection of the companionship by making an offering to the Muses out of the spoils of the victory. At a later period he became a Roman citizen, through the instrumentality of the son of Nobilior, who had been appointed a triumvir for founding a colony, and availed himself of the opportunity to gratify his father's friend and his own. Meanwhile Ennius was living in a house on the Aventine, on very restricted means, with the attendance of a single female slave, reading with pupils Greek authors and his own Latin compositions, and enjoying the intimacy of his aristocratic friends, in particular of the family of the Scipios. There he seems to have died, at the age of seventy, of a complaint described as a disease of the joints, probably gout—the result, it would appear, of that habit of drunkenness, for which he is noted in the well-known passage of Horace. The great Africanus ordered his remains to be interred in his sepulchre, the famous tomb of the Scipios; and there in the time of Livy were to be seen three statues, those of the hero and of his brother and of the poet whom they loved, standing outside the gate of Capena.

Ennius used to say that he had three hearts, because he knew three languages, Greek, Latin, and Oscan. The expression is a fine one, though we must not interpret it by our modern associations, remembering that with the

older Romans the heart was the seat of the intellect; and the boast which it symbolises is one which, if uttered with truth, might well be regarded as marking him out to be the father of Roman poetry, the man in whose capacious mind the language of Rome could take hold at once of the past and of the future, reaching out on the one hand to its early Italian cognate, and on the other to the great depository of foreign thought and feeling. Yet there were not wanting in his day men who, if they had chosen to adopt his metaphor, might have said of him that the Roman heart beat too feebly, the Greek too strongly. He lived at a time when the enthusiasm for Greek culture was forcing its way step by step against the exclusive national spirit, and the student of foreign training was perhaps in danger of being considered an enemy to his land's language. Cato, who, 'if we have writ our annals true,' had been Ennius's original patron, and who, according to a less probable part of the same story, condescended to learn Greek of him, afterwards attacked Fulvius Nobilior, with whose proceedings in Ætolia he had been in some way brought into contact, on the special ground that he had taken a poet with him into his province. The antagonism was not merely between the poetical Greek and the unpoetical Roman. There was an old school of poetry which had to yield to a new one; the Italian Camenæ were to give way to the Grecian Muses. Before Ennius appeared at Rome, Nævius the Campanian had been established there, and had obtained a name as a dramatic poet; but he had recently retired into banishment at Utica, if indeed he was not already dead. We know too little of his life or of his works to be justified in comparing him formally with his successor in poetical fame, though there are one or two faint traits which suggest the notion of a contrast. Both had seen

service in the army, Nævius having fought in the first Punic War, as Ennius in the second; but there the resemblance ceases. Nævius was a plebeian, and stood by his order, impugning the virtue of the great Scipio, and telling the Metelli that they owed their repeated consulships not to merit, but to destiny; a license of tongue which led, first to an imprisonment of sufficient length to allow him to compose two of his dramas, and afterwards to the exile in which he ended his days. Ennius, as we have seen, was the friend of the great, not necessarily compromising his own independence, but willing to link his name to theirs, and to include their praises in the poems in which he celebrated the noble deeds of the worthies of other times; a type of the Roman author as he was to be, a member of that fraternity which Horace, many years later, could describe as absorbed in composition, and estranged from worldly cares, and Juvenal as dependent on patronage, and labouring on in obscurity, sustained by the hope of earning the ivy-wreath and the bust. As poets, they appear to have come into collision in the field, not of the drama, but of the epic. Their tragedies, as we have seen, belong to the same school. In the main, they are apparently translations or adaptations from the Greek; Greek in their metre no less than in their subject and treatment. But in his exile Nævius solaced his latest years by a composition of a different kind, recording the stirring scenes of which he had himself borne a part in a heroic poem on the first Punic War. The scope of the narrative is almost wholly unknown to us, though it would seem not to have been unmixed with Greek mythological legends; but the metre was at any rate national and Italian; the Saturnian verse, 'the large utterance of the elder gods' and demigods of rural Italy; in more historical times, the measure

of its ballad poetry, if it had any, and of what was perhaps as yet its most elaborate composition in verse, the 'Odyssey' of Livius Andronicus. But when Ennius entered the field with his national poem, which was to surpass the 'Punic War,' both in the scope and magnitude of its subject and in the skill of its treatment, he chose a new metre, a long measure, as he calls it himself, the Hexameter of Homer and the Grecian Epic; and he is known to have stigmatised the verses of his predecessor, in a passage to which we have already alluded more than once, as effusions like those of the old forest gods, made by men who had never accomplished the ascent of the true Parnassus. He had not overrated the importance of a change, which, it may be said without exaggeration, was destined to revolutionise the whole structure of Roman poetry. Superficial observers are apt to treat the influence of metre with comparative indifference, as involving the mere outward form of poetry; but a more careful analysis will show that though the soul of verse is doubtless originally separable from its body, the latter is not a bare husk, to be assumed or thrown off at pleasure, but a part of an organised whole, modified and modifying in turn, and clinging to its partner with a tenacious vitality, which criticism, in attempting to disentangle, is apt to destroy. The language reacts on the thought, which, in taking shape, is obliged to part with something of its own, and accept something extraneous and accidental; and the metre exercises a similar constraint on the language, enforcing the substitution of one word for another, and thus producing a still further departure from the precise character of the conception originally formed by the mind. This second bondage makes itself felt much more in ancient than in modern metres, in proportion as the rule of quantity is more

searchingly oppressive than the rule of accent. Probably the hexameter itself was a more rigorous master to the poet who accepted it than the Saturnian verse, which, though it may not have dispensed with quantity, yet seems to have admitted great varieties of structure; at any rate, it must have been found sufficiently exacting, even by those whom use or superior aptitude had taught best to comply with its humours, as perhaps the experience of some of our readers may enable them to understand. There is a work by a German scholar, Köne, 'On the Language and Metre of the Roman Epic Writers,' the object of which is to show that the introduction of the hexameter was an unfortunate innovation, alien from the genius of the language, which had already cast most of its words into moulds suited to other metres, iambic or trochaic, and so tending of itself to produce an unreal and artificial style, where words are distorted into strange forms, or exchanged for inadequate synonyms, where the grammatical proprieties of declensions and tenses are sacrificed for metrical convenience, and rhythm itself has to be violated in order to avoid unlawful sounds. Without going to this length, or speculating whether the Saturnian metre could have been made to bear the weight which, at whatever cost of straining or even cracking, was borne by the hexameter, we may still believe that Ennius's innovation was, as we have said, little less than revolutionary, and that in persuading the poets of his country to submit to a new law, he was really exercising an influence, unmistakeable, if not fully appreciable, on the language and thought of succeeding generations. The effect produced by the matter of his poetry, we must be content to take mainly on trust; what he accomplished by the form, we are able to estimate for ourselves. Those who are most inclined to feel aggrieved at the

severity of the rule under which he laid his successors, may be consoled by thinking that he appears to have suffered from it himself, while the *naïve* directness of his efforts to get relief, so unlike the artificial expedients of a later day, may excite a smile, as when he makes a tmesis which, as Servius, the commentator, truly says, though tolerable in a compound word, is 'nimis asperum' in a simple, 'saxo *cere*-comminuit-*brum*,' or where, by a dangerous extension of the figure apocope, he reduces well-known substantives to monosyllabic crude forms, 'divum domus altisonum *cœl*,' 'replet te lætificum *gau*.' It is the same even-handed justice which overtook the Greek dithyrambic poet:—

> Οἵ τ' αὐτῷ κακὰ τεύχει ἀνὴρ ἄλλῳ κακὰ τεύχων.
> Ἡ δὲ μακρὰ 'ναβολὴ τῷ ποιήσαντι κακίστη.

Niebuhr confesses that, much as he likes the 'numeri' and 'sales' of Plautus, he cannot be pleased with the hexameters of Ennius; and certainly it seems difficult to see how they could please anyone whose ear has been accustomed to the cadence, we do not say of Virgil, but of Lucretius or Catullus. They are, indeed, very similar in structure, if not in their quantities, to a boy's first attempts at school; and, like some of the early poetry of our own country, may seem to suggest a theory that the progress of versifying in a nation is after all much the same as in an individual. Yet it is through such rudimentary stages that excellence is at last attained; and as a student working with a model before him cannot hope to attain perfection in a day, so the task of bringing that model to perfection is not to be completed in a single lifetime, but has to be elaborated by generations of successive artists

But it is time that we should redeem our promise of

giving some account of the various works which Ennius is known to have left behind him, so far as it is possible to form an estimate of their character from the fragments or other notices which have been preserved to us. These works, according to Vahlen, fall under nine heads, though in the scantiness of our information even their number is not placed beyond the reach of controversy. First comes the *opus magnum*—the 'Annals,' which were in eighteen books; next his dramatic works, consisting of the tragedies which we have already discussed, and two or three comedies; six books of satires; some epigrams or inscriptions, three of which have come down to us; a poem called 'Sota,' from the Sotadic verse in which it was composed; 'Protrepticus,' apparently a collection of precepts in verse; 'Hedyphagetica,' a poem on eatable fishes; 'Epicharmus,' probably a poetical exposition of Pythagorean philosophy; and, lastly, 'Euhemerus,' a translation of the sacred history of that well-known mythological rationaliser. Of these, the first, the fragments of which occupy about six hundred lines, out of an aggregate of twelve hundred, is the only one which need occupy our attention for any time; a very few words will suffice for the rest.

The exordium of the 'Annals' appears to stand out before us with tolerable distinctness. Lucretius, at the opening of his philosophical poem, Propertius in his vision of Calliope, Virgil in the apparition of Hector to Æneas, Persius in his 'Prologue,' and again in his celebration of the bay of Luna, have all either imitated or referred to it. After an invocation to the Muses by their two names, Greek and Roman, Ennius gives an account of his calling to the office of poet, possibly modelled after the proem to Hesiod's 'Theogony'—how Homer appeared to him as he lay sleeping on Mount Parnassus, and, shedding tears

of human saltness, unfolded to him the mysteries of creation, and the divine origin of animal life. His own soul, said the father of poetry, was now animating the body of Ennius, having been transmitted from Euphorbus to himself, from himself to Pythagoras, and from Pythagoras to a peacock. Ennius wakes from his sleep, and proceeds to invite his countrymen to hear a description of the harbour of Luna, where it is conjectured that he may have dreamt this dream within a dream. Thence, by what steps we know not, he passed to the subject of his poem, the Annals of the Roman people. We catch brief glimpses of the story of Æneas, his voyage to Italy, and his interview with the King of Alba, 'rex Albai Longai,' who seems to have held the same position in Ennius's version as Latinus holds in Virgil's. The three hundred years of Alban sovereignty, so familiar to us from the 'Æneid,' have no place in the legend which Ennius followed; Æneas is himself the father of Ilia, the royal priestess who gives birth to the founder of Rome. A continuous fragment of seventeen lines is preserved by Cicero, in which the Vestal, in verses of considerable beauty, relates to her sister an alarming dream, how she was dragged by a strong and beautiful being along willowy banks that were strange to her, and, when left alone, sought in vain for her sister, but found no path to support her, and how her father appeared, and told her that she must first endure sorrow, and afterwards fortune would come to her from the river. A few scattered verses convey to us the sequel of the tale, the birth and exposure of the twins, their suckling by the wolf, their growth to manhood, and the discovery of their parentage by Amulius. Another fragment of twenty lines describes Romulus and Remus waiting for the augury which was to decide their claims, and the people looking on intently, as the spectators in

the circus watch for the consul's signal which is to let the chariots go, when suddenly, after a night of expectation, twelve sacred birds appear with the sunrise, and Romulus knows that the throne is his. Again we have a few isolated lines or parts of lines, from which we may glean, as we best can, the story of the fratricide, the rape of the Sabines, the partition of the empire with Tatius, and the death of Romulus. We have a view, too, of the council of the twelve gods,

> Juno, Vesta, Minerva, Ceres, Diana, Venus, Mars,
> Mercurius, Jovis, Neptunus, Vulcanus, Apollo,

sitting in heaven's two-gated banqueting-hall, where Juno and Venus apparently plead against each other, as in the Tenth Æneid, and the latter receives a promise from Jove that Romulus shall be made one of themselves. The only other fragment of importance in the First Book we will venture to quote, as there is something in its melancholy monotone which accords well with the subject, the lament of the Romans over their first king:—

> Pectora [fida] tenet desiderium, simul inter
> Sese sic memorant, O Romule, Romule die,
> Qualem te patriæ custodem di genuerunt!
> O pater, O genitor, O sanguen dis oriundum!
> Tu produxisti nos intra luminis oras.

These are sonorous lines; but how much finer is the lament of the Arcadians in Virgil over Pallas!

> O dolor atque decus magnum rediture parenti!
> Hæc te prima dies bello dedit, hæc eadem aufert,
> Cum tamen ingentes Rutulorum linquis acervos.

Of the next four books, from the Second to the Fifth inclusive, only stray lines have come down to us. As it were by flashes of lightning, we read of Numa's institu-

tions—a sufficiently dry catalogue—and of the sweet voice of Egeria, 'suavis sonus Egeriai;' of the victory of Horatius, and the murder of his sister; of Mettus Fuffetius, the wretched man whose mangled limbs the vulture devoured among the thorns, and interred in a cruel sepulchre; of Ancus and his foundation of Ostia; of the arrival of the first Tarquin; of the night which was the crisis of the fate of Etruria, 'Hoc noctu filo pendebit Etruria tota;' of 'the sixth king of four-cornered Rome' (such is the solitary mention of the reign of Servius Tullius); of the furious driving of Tullia's chariot; of the outrage on Lucretia, who is supposed to look up to the starry heaven and invoke the Lares; of Horatius Cocles leaping into the Tiber; of the scaling of the walls of Anxur; of the Samnite war, and the increased haughtiness of the Latins, which is expressed by a lively image, 'aqua est aspersa Latinis.'

The Sixth Book, which treated of the war with Pyrrhus, or, as Ennius called him, Burrus, comes out in a somewhat clearer light. It opened with a line, of which the first part has been copied by Lucretius, the last by Virgil, 'Quis potis ingentes oras evolvere belli?' The important crisis seems to have been marked by another council of the gods; but no trace has been preserved of their deliberations. One line records the well-known equivocal oracle, 'Aio te, Æacida, Romanos vincere posse;' another contains a reflection on the family of Æacus, perhaps by the discontented Tarentines:—

> Stolidum genus Æacidarum:
> Bellipotentes sunt magis quam sapientipotentes.

Then we have the preparations at Rome, the proletariat armed, sentries posted throughout the city, and the forest trees hewn everywhere for timber, the last a passage

closely followed by Virgil in his accounts of the funerals of Misenus and Pallas,—

> Incedunt arbusta per alta, securibus cædunt,
> Percellunt magnas quercus, exciditur ilex,
> Fraxinus frangitur, atque abies consternitur alta.
> Pinus proceras pervortunt: omne sonabat
> Arbustum fremitu silvai frondosai.

Next follow those lines, so familiar to every reader of Cicero's 'Offices,' in which the King of Epirus restores the captives unransomed, declaring that he will not make a merchandise of war, but try out the question of sovereignty with the Romans by force of hand, and meanwhile respect the freedom of those whose lives the fortune of battle has respected. Cineas is sent to Rome, but Appius Claudius appeals to the better mind of his countrymen, and the orator returns without the expected peace, and makes report to the king. Two lines on the supposed self-devotion of the third Decius—a story which Cicero is thought to have derived from Ennius—and one or two probably referring to the operations at Beneventum, complete our knowledge of the Sixth Book.

The Seventh was probably devoted to the First Punic War. It is there that we find the sarcasm on Nævius's poem, which, however, he admits to have preoccupied the field, so that he proposes himself only to touch on the period slightly. But he seems to have taken occasion to congratulate himself on his own happy daring, which led him to unlock the sacred portals, adding that the blissful vision of wisdom, 'Sophiam, sapientia quæ perhibetur,' is to be attained only by those who have begun to study. A number of detached lines follow, some of them describing the practice of rowing, in reference, doubtless, to the first naval armament of Rome, others seemingly from speeches of generals encouraging their men, and one or

two giving a picturesque glimpse of external nature, the autumnal reddening of the leaves, and the appearance of the cypress and the box, 'Russescunt frundes, . . . longique cupressi Stant rectis foliis et amaro corpore buxum.' Among these there is one of much greater length, which claims especial notice. It is a description of a friend and counsellor of one of the generals, the sharer of his table and his conversation, and of the heap of his cares, 'rerum suarum congeriem,' with whom he used to confer when wearied by the day's fatigue in the broad forum and sacred senate, speaking boldly to him of things great and small, good and bad, and taking with him many a pleasure in public and in private; a man never led to commit a crime through levity or malice; learned, faithful, pleasing, eloquent, contented, knowing how to speak at the right moment, but sparing of his words; with a breast where many ancient things were buried, and a character which preserved both the old and the new.

> Scitus . . . multa tenens antiqua sepulta, vetustas
> Quem fecit mores veteresque novosque tenentem,
> Multorum veterum leges divumque hominumque;
> Prudenter qui dicta loquive tacereve possit:
> Hunc inter pugnas Servilius sic compellat.

We know nothing of Servilius but the name, while his marvellous friend is nameless; but Gellius, the preserver of the fragment, says on the authority of Ælius Stilo, that the poet intended to draw his own picture, doubtless as he appeared in Ætolia at the side of Fulvius Nobilior. As a portrait, perhaps, it hardly falls within our criticism; but we may be allowed to give it some praise as a painting.

After the Seventh Book the fragments again diminish, both in magnitude and in interest. The Eighth and Ninth were on the Second Punic War, but very little remains to show the way in which the subject was treated.

There are the lines about Discord bursting open the iron-bound gates of the war-god, which Horace quotes as a specimen of the epic style; the lines on war which Cicero uses in his 'Pro Murena,' describing the triumph of violence—

> Pellitur e medio sapientia, vi geritur res,
> Spernitur orator bonus, horridus miles amatur;

some single lines on a battle, probably Cannæ, dust flying and darts showering, and the Carthaginians ham-stringing the prisoners, a glimpse of yet another council of the gods, where Juno lays aside her enmity to Rome, and Jupiter promises that Carthage shall fall; and the well-known eulogies on Cethegus and Fabius Cunctator, 'the choice flower of Rome, Persuasion's very marrow,' and 'the one man who saved the State by delay, caring more for men's lives than for their tongues.'

In the Tenth Book the Muse is invoked to sing of the exploits of the Roman generals in the war with King Philip of Macedon. Flamininus is troubled night and day, thinking how to penetrate into the enemy's country, when an Epirote shepherd, poor and honest, 'vir haud magna cum re sed plenus fidei,' accosts him in words applied by Cicero to another Titus, his friend Pomponius Atticus, and inquires what reward he may expect if he shall succeed in relieving him of his care. After this well-known fragment, the most noticeable is a simile of those lines about a hound giving tongue, applied, we may suppose, to the Romans tracking the foe:—

> Sicut si quando vinclis venatica velox
> Apta solet canis forte feram si nare sagaci
> Sensit, voce sua nictit, ululatque ibi acute.

The subjects of the two next books are not clearly ascertained. One fragment is supposed to refer to Flamin-

inus in Greece, another to a possible invective of Cato against luxury in dress; but the only one of interest is a couplet, imitated by Virgil in his Seventh Æneid, on the inextinguishable vitality of the old Trojan stock:—

> Quæ neque Dardaniis campis potuere perire,
> Nec cum capta capi, nec cum combusta cremari.

The war with Antiochus is thought to have occupied the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Books. Antiochus himself is supposed to be speaking in one fragment, where he complains of having been misled by Hannibal; the rest are general enough—a reflection on the trustworthiness of soothsayers, a few scattered lines about ships sailing, where the yellow sea is coupled with the green brine—a propriety of colouring vindicated by Gellius—a word of encouragement before a battle, and another of complaint after defeat. Fulvius Nobilior is thought to have been the hero of the next book, so that there at least the poet would have spoken as an eyewitness; but the fragments, though apparently pointing to the siege of Ambracia, present nothing very tangible.

The Sixteenth, as we are told by Pliny, was added in honour of T. Cæcilius Denter and his brother, personages who figure very slightly in the history as we read it, but whom Ennius seems to have extolled as models of valour. The fragments are rather various than remarkable; we may, however, specify three which speak of the sloping mountains whence the night rises, of the night flying with a girdle of constellations round her, and of the torch of day setting and covering the ocean with a trail of crimson light. The few remains of the Seventeenth Book tell us vaguely of battle scenes; but there seems reason to believe that it contained a tribute to the magnanimity of a censor who, finding himself elected to-

gether with a personal enemy, sought a reconciliation on the spot, that they might perform their joint work with joint heart and soul.

The Eighteenth and last Book embraced the Histrian War. There is a picture, studied after Homer's Ajax, and itself reproduced in Virgil's Turnus, of a tribune defending himself against the Histrians, with darts raining on his shield and helmet, and falling harmless and shivered to the ground, with sweat streaming from every pore, yet not a moment to take breath. But the interest of the book, at least to us, must have centred in the discourse about himself, in which the old bard seems to have indulged in closing this his greatest poem. Even now we may read with sympathy his boastful allusion to his late enrolment among the citizens of the conquering city — 'Nos sumus Romani, qui fuimus ante Rudini;' we may be touched by the mention he appears to have made of the year of his age in which he wrote, bordering closely on the appointed term of man's life; and we may applaud as the curtain falls over his grand comparison of himself to a victorious racer, laden with Olympic honours, and now at last consigned to repose:—

> Sicut fortis equus, spatio qui sæpe supremo
> Vicit Olimpia, nunc senio confectus quiescit.

A very few words, as we have stated already, will despatch what has to be said on the other works of Ennius, numerous and varied as these appear to have been. His strength was not supposed to lie in comedy; a poetical classification of the Roman comic writers, quoted by Gellius, gives him the last place in a list of ten, and that only in deference to his antiquity; and, accordingly, the whole number of fragments that has

come down to us amounts only to eleven lines, or parts of lines, preserved simply as containing certain words, and throwing no light on the nature of the pieces from which they came. The three titles which we possess are 'Ambracia,' which, as we have seen, may have been a *prætexta*; 'Capuncula,' if the same is rightly restored, as we should say, the Maid of the Inn, and 'Pancratiastæ,' the Prize-fighters. Of Ennius's historical position as a writer of satire we have no space to speak at length. He seems to have been the first who gave satire its form; its spirit of personal invective it did not receive till later. We hear of as many as six books of his Satires; but the actual remains are very slender, though sufficient to show that he preserved that early characteristic of the 'Satura,' a medley of metres. The most memorable of these books would seem to have been the third, if it is rightly identified with a poem which he wrote in honour of Scipio. The fragments which remain are partly personal, as where he thanks himself in the name of mankind for giving them to drink of the fiery wine of song drawn from his heart:—

> Enni poeta salve qui mortalibus
> Versus propinas flammeos medullitus,

or where he tells us (if the line has been restored to its right place) that he never writes poetry but when he has the gout; partly laudatory of his hero, who appeals for a witness of his deeds to the broad and cultivated plains of Africa, 'lati campi quos gerit Africa terra politos;' and in one case simply picturesque, describing a universal hush in nature:—

> Mundus cæli vastus constitit silentio;
> Et Neptunus sævus undis asperis pausam dedit:
> Sol equis iter repressit ungulis volantibus:
> Constitere amnes perennes, arbores vento vacant.

A fragment about a slave, who annoys his prudent master by his reckless laugh and wolfish appetite; four jingling verses, telling a hoaxer that when the hoax does not succeed, the hoaxer is hoaxed; a version, which, however, exists only in Gellius's prose, of Æsop's fable about the lark and her young ones, and the well-known line about the resemblance of the ape to man, 'Simia quam similis, turpissima bestia, nobis,' comprise all that need be noted in the rest of the Satires. The three 'Epigrams' or Inscriptions, ten lines in all, we will quote entire. The first is the famous epitaph on himself:—

Aspicite, O cives, senis Enni imaginis formam!
Hic vestrum panxit fortia facta patrum.
Nemo me lacrimis decoret nec funera fletu
Faxit. Cur? Volito vivus per ora virum.

The second is on Africanus, the man to whom never friend or foe could repay what he gave:—

Hic est ille situs cui nemo civis neque hostis
Quivit pro factis reddere opis pretium.

The third is also on Africanus, into whose mouth it is put:—

A sole exoriente supra Mæotis paludes
Nemo est qui factis me æquiperare queat.
Si fas endo plagas cœlestium ascendere cuiquam est,
Mi soli cæli maxima porta patet.

The three extant verses of the 'Sota' are not worth dwelling on. All that is known of the 'Protrepticus,' or Collection of Precepts, consists of a single word 'pannibus,' a variety for 'pannis,' the dative of 'pannus,' and two lines and a half about a husbandman separating tares from his wheat. Of the 'Hedyphagetica,' an imitation or translation of a once popular poem

by Archestratus of Gela, Appuleius has preserved us eleven lines, describing various kinds of fish, and the places where they are to be caught or bought, in language which Horace may have had in his mind when he wrote the dialogue between himself and Catius. The title of the 'Epicharmus' is more promising: but the fragments come to but little. It was written in trochaic tetrameters, and the philosopher himself seems to have been a speaker in it, if not the speaker of the whole. Its chief utterances tell us that the body is earth and the mind fire taken from the sun, and that Jupiter is the air, comprising wind and clouds, rain and cold, all which are rightly called Jupiter, 'quoniam mortales atque urbes beluasque omnes juvat.' The extant remains of the 'Euhemerus' have descended to us in prose; there is, however, reason to believe that it was originally a poem, but that some later hand modernised and transposed it; and it has been shown that a number of trochaic tetrameters can be extracted from it without much difficulty. The prose fragments, which, though not numerous, are of considerable length, owe their preservation to Lactantius. Whatever may have been the case in their original state, in their present form they do not possess much of the colour of poetry; in fact, the language may be said to reflect the character of that jejune mythology which it was intended to expound.

THE LATER ROMAN EPIC—STATIUS' 'THEBAID.'[1]

THERE is no stronger attestation of the influence exercised by Virgil on his country's literature than the large space which the epic occupies in the poetry of post-Augustan Rome. In Greece, after the cessation of that creative activity which produced the poems of the Cycle and the legends of Heracles, the epic muse found scarcely any worshipper worthy of the name. For several centuries the hexameter had the whole field to itself; but when the territory was encroached upon by other settlers, the ancient form of composition dwindled away, like an aboriginal tribe in the presence of later civilisation. While the spirit of Grecian song was pouring itself forth in the lyric and the drama, the recollection of Homer was continued only by a few faint echoes, scarcely audible to contemporary ears, and wholly, or almost wholly, lost to modern times; and though Apollonius Rhodius is not, like Panyasis, Chœrilus, and Antimachus, or his own Alexandrian brethren, Rhianus and Euphorion, a mere name to us, we feel as we read him that he would hardly have counted as an eminent poet, among a poetical nation like the Greeks, in an age where poetry was still fresh and vigorous. But in Rome the case is far otherwise. As we pass from the golden to the silver age, we are confronted by a body of epic poetry which contains more than four times the bulk of the 'Æneid.' The 'Pharsalia' of Lucan and the unfinished 'Argonautics' of Velarius Flaccus are indeed shorter than

[1] Reprinted from the *North British Review*, No. lxxix.

Virgil's poem; but the 'Thebaid' of Statius, taken together with the fragment of the 'Achilleid,' is considerably longer, and the 'Punic War' of Silius Italicus is nearly half as long again. These works, in fact, constitute about a third of the extant classical poetry since the Augustan era. Nor have we any reason to think that they have been preserved to us by mere accident, while others, more worthy of being kept alive, have been left to perish. We may not value these vast heroic efforts as we value some of the less ostentatious performances of the same period, the Satires of Persius and Juvenal, or the Epigrams of Martial. We may prefer, as we doubtless should prefer, the 'Silvæ' of Statius to his 'Thebaid,' and argue that the other three poets might have expended their powers more profitably in attempts of a less ambitious nature. But we cannot doubt that all four stood high in the estimation of their own period, the period immediately succeeding the acme of Roman culture: two of them conspicuously so; and there is certainly some significance in the fact that so much of the poetical power of a not ungifted generation should have been consumed upon a species of poetry which earlier and later ages, for very various reasons, have been equally forward to extol, and equally backward to cultivate.

Doubtless there were other influences which tended to recommend the epic to the poets of Cæsarian Rome. In the days of the intellectual glory of Athens, the real successors of Homer were to be found in the great fathers of the drama. To the public, the pleasure of listening to a rhapsodist, however skilled, must have been tame when compared with the charm of a dialogue sustained by well-graced actors, relieved by orchestral music, and set off by the accessories of scenery; while the poet would naturally prefer a field of labour which,

independently of the confessed advantages of novelty and popularity, might appear less interminable and more diversified. But the drama, the tragic drama at any rate, had never taken a thoroughly firm hold on Roman soil; and it withered rather than flourished under the imperial sunshine. The degradation of the chorus stamped it from the first with the character of comparative insignificance; it was Greek tragedy shorn of one-half of its glory. Already, in the time of Horace,[1] the audience had begun to tire of the tragic dialogue, and to care only for the splendour of the spectacle; and it was not likely that under the successors of Augustus the drama should compete advantageously with the shows of the circus. The tragedy of Seneca was probably unacted tragedy; and unacted tragedy, as the public opinion of our own day tells us, is a plain confession of weakness. But here was still a field for heroic poetry; a wider one, it might seem, than it had enjoyed even in Virgil's time. The poet of the 'Æneid' had read parts of his work in the presence of the imperial family; but, if we except a doubtful story of the recitation of his 'Eclogues,'[2] we do not know that he ever appeared before a more general audience. But the atmosphere of imperial Rome was favourable to recitations; and it is evident from Juvenal's language [3] that they formed a more prominent feature in his experience than they had done in that of Horace or Ovid. The same Satire which complains that they did not bring money, admits that they

[1] Horace, *Epistles*, Book ii. Ep. i. 187 foll.

[2] The story is that the *Bucolics* were so popular as to be recited repeatedly on the stage, and that Cicero, being present on one of these occasions, pronounced the author 'Magnæ spes altera Romæ.' Cicero was killed before Virgil lost his farm, so the whole may be a figment.

[3] Contrast the early part of the First and Seventh Satires of Juvenal with such passages as Hor. Sat. I. iv. 23; Ep. I. xix. 37 foll.

brought fame. The poet might appear in his own person, and deliver his own verses, with no actor to intercept the rays of popular favour. The 'Thebaid,' as we learn from the famous passage in Juvenal, was received with rapture by a crowded assembly. The author himself, in a poem to a friend, speaks of the day when the representatives of Rome's great founders will come to hear his 'Achilleid.' We do not know what was the precise nature of the periodical contests for the crown of poetry, which formed so characteristic a feature of this, the silver age of Roman genius, and in which Statius was repeatedly successful; but we may well imagine that the poems submitted to competition would be of a more elaborate kind than the occasional pieces which make up the five books of the 'Silvæ.' The Roman Clio had not yet abandoned faith in her origin; she still strove to execute feats which might be worthy of a goddess. In a later age we find her contenting herself with minor epic excursions, like the 'Rape of Proserpine' of Claudian, while she sometimes condescends, with Ausonius, to compose catalogues of words and names for grammar-schools, and celebrate the conflicting powers of Yes and No. But at present she is confident in her strength, and even fonder of exhibiting it than when that strength was really at its height. The epigram is the amusement of her leisure moments; she may give days or weeks to the composition of a satire: but it is to poems like the 'Thebaid,' the product of the vigils of twelve long years, that she looks for enduring glory.[1]

The early Roman epic had been national in subject, if not in form. Nævius had sung of the great struggle

[1] See the concluding lines of the *Thebaid*:—

O mihi bissenos multum vigilata per annos
Thebai,

against Carthage; Ennius had recounted the annals of the Roman people from the days of Romulus, if not earlier; Hostius had commemorated the war with Histria. The 'Æneid' is the glorification of the forefathers of the imperial nation, who, though vanquished in Phrygia, had been victorious in Italy. But the 'Æneid,' though national in one of its aspects, is exotic in another. It might be read by a Roman as a celebration of the antiquarian glories of his country; it might be read as a tale of the Homeric school, a sequel to the 'Iliad,' a companion to the 'Odyssey.' It would naturally foster the love, not only of Greek mythology in relation to the history of Rome, but of Greek mythology as such; of that wonderful body of legendary lore, by turns terrible and pathetic, sublime and grotesque, which even in our alien atmosphere has such a charm for the imagination of the boy, and for the intellect of the grown man. These two aspects combined in the 'Æneid,' are found separately in the epics of the silver age. Silius and Lucan choose national subjects; the one going back on the traces of Nævius, and celebrating the Punic Wars, the other treading on the scarcely extinguished embers of civil discord, and telling the story of Pharsalia. Flaccus and Statius resort to the storehouse of Grecian fable, which furnishes to the former the voyage of the Argonauts, the subject selected by the Alexandrian poet, to the latter the first siege of Thebes, the fertile theme of Athenian tragedy, and the life of Achilles, that grand whole, of which only a part had been appropriated by Homer.

The choice of such a subject as the 'Thebaid' is itself a significant one. It was indeed not new to epic poetry; it formed the subject of one of the poems of the Cycle, the substance of which modern critics[1] have apparently

[1] See Mure, *History of Greek Literature*, vol. ii. pp. 269 foll.

been able to recover by the help of Pindar and Pausanias, though the extant fragments are but few; and it was revived some centuries later by Antimachus of Claros, whose enormous poem, twenty-four books of which were occupied in bringing the Seven Chiefs to Thebes, was listened to, Cicero tells us, by Plato, after all the other auditors had left the room, and is known to have been preferred by the imperial judgment of Hadrian to the works of Homer. Our associations with it are, of course, those of readers of Greek tragedy, in whose gallery of terrible imagery it forms so prominent a feature. There is reason to think, that as treated in the cyclic poem, it was without some of those revolting traits[1] which now characterise it; but whatever may have been the condition in which the tragic poets received it, there can be no doubt about the horrors which invested it when it left their hands. As handled by Æschylus and Euripides, it pleases more than it shocks; but it is only because we have submitted ourselves to the laws of that species of art, the object of which is to purge the passions by pity and terror. Just before Statius's time, Seneca, if we are right, as we well may be, in ascribing the Theban tragedy to him, has shown what might be made of the subject by a practised rhetorician who should simply abandon himself to the task of drawing out its horrible and loathsome details. Possibly by a recurrence to the ancient severity of treatment, it might have been made endurable as a subject for narrative poetry. But such self-restraint was foreign alike to the ambition of the poet and to the taste of his age. Statius appears to have been drawn to the subject, not in spite but in consequence of the features which would have repelled a sounder and more chastened judgment. He

[1] Such as the self-inflicted blindness of Œdipus.

wished to produce what, in language with which the somewhat kindred experience of our own time has made us familiar, would be called a work of the 'sensation' school; and in the choice of means towards his end, he certainly showed himself not injudicious.

It is of this poem that we intend to speak for the rest of the present article. We shall give a critical account in detail of the conduct of the story; we shall indicate more briefly the principal characteristics of the poet's style; and we shall mention one special point which may seem to entitle him to the praise of incidental success, even though the final verdict should be, as we fear it will be, that the poem, as a whole, is an elaborate failure.

The 'Thebaid' is contained in twelve books, the number which the 'Æneid' had made classical; and the average content of each is about the same as the average content of the several books of the 'Æneid.' But it is made clear at the very outset, that the spirit of Statius is not quite the same as the spirit of Virgil. Instead of the modest 'cano' with which Virgil informs us of the subject of his song, we are told that Pierian inspiration impels the poet to sing of the strife of the brothers and the guilt of Thebes. He asks rhetorically where he shall commence; whether from the very first, the rape of Europa and the voyage of Cadmus; and concludes that such a starting-place would be too far off, and that he had better confine himself to the family of Œdipus. He invokes his Cæsar, Domitian, remembering that Virgil had invoked Augustus, but apparently forgetting that it was at the outset, not of the 'Æneid,' but of the 'Georgics;' and then, after another rhetorical inquiry, which of the invading heroes he shall sing first, plunges into his subject. In the true vein of Seneca, he introduces us at once to the blind

Œdipus, who, in the depth of his solitude at Thebes, raises the empty sockets of his eyes to heaven, strikes the ground with bloody hands, and implores the Queen of the Furies, by the recollection of his former deeds of horror, to avenge him on his undutiful children, and urge their congenial minds to some crime great enough to gladden their father. The Fury, to the loathsomeness of whose personal appearance full justice is done, makes her way to Thebes, and induces the two young kings to agree to a compact that they should reign alternately, the outgoing king leaving the country at the end of his year. Thebes, we are told, is but a poor kingdom,[1] yet the lust of sway is as strong in the two brothers as if they were striving for the empire of the world. Eteocles is the first to reign. The people feel some discontent at the arrangement, which they think, not without reason, has been made for the advantage of the brothers more than for their own. Jupiter calls a council, and announces his intention of taking vengeance on the two royal houses of Thebes and Argos for a long series of crimes. Juno puts in a word for Argos, but is sternly overruled, and Mercury is sent down to raise the ghost of Laius, who is to incite Eteocles to break the compact. Meantime Polynices, being excluded by the terms of the compact from Thebes, resolves, for some reason unknown, to visit Argos. He is represented as a veritable exile, without any companion to share his journey, which turns out to be an exceedingly rough one, through rain, wind, and thunder. He finds his way to the palace of Adrastus, the king of Argos, and has just taken shelter in the vestibule, when he is interrupted by another traveller in a similar plight. This is Tydeus, who has had to leave

[1] 'Pugna est de paupere regno' (Book i. 151), one of the very few expressions in Statius that have become in any way proverbial.

his own home, Calydon, for having killed his brother. The strangers fight with fists, attempt to gouge each other, and would have drawn their swords if the noise had not awakened Adrastus, who separates them, takes them into his house, and entertains them. It is the night of a festival to Apollo, the institution of which is related by Adrastus in a long story, obviously modelled on Evander's narrative of the death of Cacus. A hymn to the great Sun-God concludes the book.

While this is going on, Laius is being conducted to earth by Mercury, not without envious gibes from his brother shades, who solace themselves with thinking that he will like his underground dwelling less for having been allowed a glimpse of daylight. On reaching Thebes, he takes the form of Tiresias, and appears to Eteocles in a vision, at the end of which he makes himself known. The scene then changes to Argos again. The morning after the storm, Adrastus makes a speech to his guests, and offers them respectively the hands of his two daughters, whom they had seen at the banquet of the previous night. They accept with thankfulness, and the double nuptials are celebrated with great pomp, which is, however, marred by one bad omen, the fall of a heavy shield from the roof of the temple of Pallas, just as the brides-elect are entering it by torchlight. The wedding festivities over, Polynices begins to sigh for Thebes; and eventually it is agreed that Tydeus, who has now come to be his firmest friend, should undertake the office of ambassador to Eteocles, and remind him that the year of royalty has expired. This duty he discharges in a speech which might have ruffled a more accommodating temper than that with which he has to deal. The king refuses to abdicate, basing his resolution on public grounds, as a change of rulers must be a bad thing for the nation; the ambassador breaks into a fury,

denounces war, captivity, and death, and so leaves the presence. Eteocles determines to avenge himself on his audacious visitor, and posts fifty men in ambush along the road by which Tydeus has to travel. And now the poet has got his opportunity, and he uses it unsparingly. The scene is appropriate to a deed of impiety, being a defile overlooked by a rock—a place where the Sphinx once sat and tore her victims, and which cattle, and even birds of ill omen, avoid with horror. Tydeus is surprised by a dart, which strikes him, but does not draw blood; he vehemently calls on his adversaries to show themselves, springs on the fatal rock, and from that vantage-ground attacks the enemy with a fragment of stone, crushing four and making the rest retire. He comes down from the rock, and they soon assail him again; but he is more than a match for them; he keeps them off with his sword, receives their spears on his shield, and hurls the weapons back with deadly effect. Finally, he stands like Ulysses after the slaughter of the suitors, with all slain but a few unnerved wretches, who vainly beg for life, or attempt a feeble resistance. One of these, who happened to be innocent, is spared at the instance of Pallas, and sent back to Thebes to tell the tale. The conqueror ends the book with another hymn of praise, which this time is to Pallas.

The Third Book brings us back to Eteocles, who has passed a restless night, wondering that he does not hear of the death of Tydeus. In due time the unhappy survivor arrives, tells his tale, inveighs against his wicked master, and ends by stabbing himself. Eteocles refuses him burial; and the poet, with that zeal for freedom which so curiously characterises the courtiers of imperial Rome, delivers an enthusiastic eulogy on the man who dares boldly to confront a tyrant. The bodies of the

other ambuscaders are brought home and buried, and there is more free speaking against Eteocles. Jupiter has been watching what has happened, and apparently thinking that Argos and Thebes are not sufficiently likely to quarrel already, sends for Mars, and bids him pay a visit to the Argives. Venus stops her lover as he is going, and pleads her affection for Thebes; he reassures her by a rough caress, hurting her, we are told, against his shield, and says that Fate must have its way, but that when the war has begun, he will bear hardly on Argos. And now we are called back to Tydeus, who reaches his father-in-laws's home, and finding a council assembled, urges an immediate march on Thebes; to which Adrastus replies that he will think about it. After a week's deliberation, the Argive king resolves to find out the will of Heaven, and consults two prophets, Melampus and Amphiaraus. They agree to observe the flight of birds, and after a prayer to Jupiter, which reads like a philosophical apology for the practice of augury, are at last rewarded by an omen. They see an innumerable multitude of swans, which from their peaceful appearance they conclude to symbolise Thebes; these are attacked by seven eagles, of course the seven Argive chiefs, which in their turn meet with mysterious fates of various kinds, corresponding to the fates which actually await the doomed warriors. Statius, elsewhere minute even to tediousness, is here obscure and brief; he indemnifies us, however, by denouncing in his own person the passion for prying into futurity. Amphiaraus, being one of the seven intended chiefs, has discovered his own fate; and now, instead of telling what he knows, he buries himself in gloomy privacy, and keeps silence for twelve days. The war-fever rises, and Capaneus, one of the Argive magnates, threatens the augur, and throws contempt on his act. On this he

speaks, and in terms which, though somewhat enigmatical, clearly announces coming ruin, warns his hearers to abandon the expedition. Capaneus retorts in a speech, where, by a happy inconsistency of impiety, the gods are alternately blasphemed and denied, and carries the people with him. Argia, the wife of Polynices, pays a midnight visit to her father, and presses on him her husband's claim. He soothes her, and the book closes.

At the opening of the Fourth Book we find that a second year has been spent in preparation, and that the expected day has come at last. The seven chiefs are recounted in order, Adrastus himself, Polynices, Tydeus, Hippomedon, Capaneus, Amphiaraus, Parthenopæus; some of them apparently leaders of independent contingents, others appointed to command tribes subject to the Argive crown. One or two incidents occur:—Eriphyle, the wife of Amphiaraus, is bribed by a fatal necklace, the property of the princess Argia, to induce her husband to join the army; Atalanta, the mother of Parthenopæus, parts with her son in words which show that she does not expect to see him again. The scene shifts, and we are at Thebes, which has already heard the rumour of invasion. As at Argos, there is a wish to explore the future; and the blind Tiresias and his daughter Manto perform magical rites. At last the infernal world opens, and Manto is proceeding to describe the commonplace features of it for her father's benefit, when he tells her that he knows them already, and bids her concentrate her attention on the spirits of Argos and Thebes. These accordingly pass in a somewhat tedious review, when Tiresias, finding that a kind of second-sight is given to him, singles out the ghost of Laius, and by a mixture of threatening and encouragement extorts the information that Thebes will conquer, that Polynices will

not gain the throne, and that Œdipus will have his will. We leave the invaded, and return to the invaders, who are on their march through the forest of Nemea. Bacchus, the patron of Thebes, resolves to trouble them, and prevails on the nymphs of the spot to dry up the rivers. Burning with thirst, in their wanderings they meet with Hypsipyle, the nurse of the child of Lycurgus, the king of the country, and are guided by her to a small stream which is still flowing. Upon this they throw themselves pell-mell, struggling for the water with a fury like that of an army in action, and continuing to drink when it is already foul and muddy. Again the book is ended by a sort of hymn, which on this occasion is addressed to the god of the stream, by one of the chiefs from the middle of the water.[1]

The Fifth Book contributes but little to the progress of the poem. Adrastus, wishing to show his interest in the benefactress of his army, asks Hypsipyle who she is, and hears a story in reply which occupies no less than 450 lines, more than half the book. She was a noble lady of Lemnos, and was living there with her father Thoas, when Venus, deeming herself neglected by the Lemnian women, made them first estrange themselves from their husbands, and finally resolve to slaughter the whole male population —a resolution which they accomplished on the occasion of their husbands returning from an expedition against Thrace. Hypsipyle saved her father, who escaped to Chios, under the guidance of his father, Bacchus; but this act of splendid mendacity was not known, and the

[1] There is a difficult line in this part (v. 829), which is not cleared up by such commentators as we have been able to consult:—

> Hac sævisse tenus populorum incepta tuorum
> Sufficiat.

Read 'in cœpta,' and all will be plain.

Lemnian ladies made her their queen. They were beginning to repent of their crime, when they were visited by the Argonauts, whom they first attempted to repulse, but finally fell in love with, Hypsipyle herself becoming the mother of twins by Jason. With the spring the Argonauts left them, and about the same time news arrived that Hypsipyle's father was alive. She fled, but fell in with pirates, who sold her to the master whose child she now nurses. This lengthy and irrelevant tale is told, like the story of the Thebaid itself, with much rhetorical indirectness; a good deal of effort is required to follow it; and whether it tired the hearers or no, it certainly tires the readers. However, if not important in one sense, it is important in another. While the nurse is telling her troubles, the infant is killed by a serpent, which the poet supposes to carry its sting in its tail. The serpent is attacked by the heroes, and killed by Capaneus, who expresses a hope that he may be slaying a favourite of the gods; the Nymphs and Fauns mourn for the reptile, and Jupiter is nearly avenging it by lightning. Hypsipyle is frantic at her loss, as is her royal employer, the child's father, who would have killed her on the spot, but for the interposition of the Argive chiefs, and the sudden appearance of her two sons, who happen just at that moment to have arrived at the palace in quest of their mother. This time the book is ended, not by a hymn, but by an oracular utterance from Amphiaraus, who tells the afflicted father and the Argives that the child's death was destined, but that, by way of compensation, it has been made a deity.

The Sixth Book has often been pointed to as a signal instance of Statius's want of judgment. Like the Twenty-third Iliad and the Fifth Æneid, it is taken up with funeral games celebrated by the heroes in honour of the

deified infant, as though the poet thought a book of games a constituent part of an epic, and introduced it without asking whether it was appropriate to the story or not. A favourable critic of the last century, who published a translation of the book,[1] thinks it at once a pleasing relief from the horrors of the story, and a gentle introduction to the wars that are to come; an opinion in which we do not think a continuous reader of the poem will agree with him. A somewhat better vindication will be found in the fact that this celebration seems to have formed part of the original Theban story, being, in fact, the legendary account of the institution of the Nemean games. But however the episode might have fared in the hands of a more judicious poet, in those of Statius it merely serves to distract us by a needless variety of incident. The games are conducted by the Argives, the father and mother simply abandoning themselves to wild and furious grief. There is a chariot-race, in which Polynices drives his father-in-law's horse, the famous Arion, and shares the fate of Phaethon, with whom he is compared. There is a foot-race, which is disturbed, like that in Virgil, by a trick, the second runner pulling the first back by the hair; but they run again, and the author of the foul play is fairly beaten. There is a throwing of quoits, which affords no remarkable incident. There is a boxing-match, where the gigantic Capaneus is confronted by a cooler combatant, who baffles him, but whose life he would apparently have taken had he not been appeased by the prize. There is a wrestling-match, where Tydeus throws an opponent of Herculean bulk, complacently observing, as he takes the prize, how much more he might have done had he not left so much of his blood on

[1] Harte, quoted by Malone in a note on Dryden's *Discourse on Epic Poetry* (Dryden's Prose Works, vol. iv. p. 428).

the plains of Thebes. There was to have been a combat with cold steel, had it not struck Adrastus that his chiefs had better reserve their fury for the enemy than expend it on each other. All the seven generals have now shown some kind of superiority but Adrastus, who is accordingly complimented by being asked to volunteer a display of his strength or skill in shooting with the bow or hurling the javelin. He shoots at an ash-tree in the distance; the arrow hits the mark, but flies back to the place whence it had been shot. The spectators assign it to natural causes; but it is really a portent, signifying that he alone is to return from the expedition.

The Seventh Book is much more business-like, not only bringing the heroes to Thebes, but accomplishing one of the chief events of the war. Jupiter, giving a nod which, we are assured, adds sensibly to the burden of Atlas, sends Mercury to stimulate Mars, who is to be told how the Argives are waiting their time, and to have the option given him of carrying on matters more vigorously, or abandoning his office of war-god, and leaving the conduct of the invasion to Pallas. Mars is found in his palace, which is described after the manner of Ovid; and he is not long in putting himself into motion. A false alarm is raised, and the Argives are made to think that the Thebans are advancing to meet them. Bacchus pleads to Jupiter for Thebes, and complains that he is being sacrificed to his stepmother: Jupiter answers that he is not influenced by Juno, but by the Fates, and that, though the race of Œdipus must perish, Thebes itself is to be respited. Eteocles prepares to defend the city, and assembles his forces. Antigone appears on the walls, as she does in the 'Phœnissæ' of Euripides, with an aged attendant, whom she questions about such of the Theban leaders as she does not know by sight. The old man

enters into a long rhetorical detail, which is, as usual, obscure from want of simplicity, and breaks off weeping at the thought of Laius, his ancient master. Eteocles harangues his army, briefly and with some vigour. The invaders march on, though forbidding portents spring up along the whole line of their route; rivers flowing backward, showers of stones, oracles struck dumb, ghosts of great criminals appearing, and weeping statues. The Asopus swells as if to oppose their passage, but Hippomedon dashes into the stream, and the rest follow him. When they reach Thebes, Jocasta insists on seeing Polynices, and produces a momentary impression, which, however, a fierce speech from Tydeus is sufficient to dispel. The war is precipitated by an incident, evidently borrowed from the Seventh Æneid of Virgil. There are two tame tigers, which, having drawn the car of Bacchus in the famous Indian campaign, are allowed to run loose, and honoured with semi-divine observances. A Fury, who is apparently in attendance on Mars, brings back their savage nature; they attack the Argives, and are pierced through and through with javelins, and driven to Thebes. The sacrilegious author of their wounds is killed in his turn, and the battle begins. Amphiaraus, the doomed augur, performs prodigies of valour. In the midst of them, his charioteer is killed, and Apollo takes the vacant place, when a scene ensues, which Mr. Merrivale[1] justly characterises as a really fine one, though overdrawn and overloaded. Apollo reveals himself, and tells his votary that the hour of doom is come. Amphiaraus answers shortly and sadly. The earth is felt to shake; a chasm opens at the horses' feet; and the augur goes down alive into the depth in his chariot, with one hand still on the reins, and the other on his weapon.

[1] *History of the Romans under the Empire.*

If Statius is able to draw a striking picture, he certainly is not able to leave it alone when drawn. The Eighth Book follows Amphiaraus down the chasm, and describes, at considerable length, the effect of his sudden appearance on the shades; how Pluto rises in gloomy wrath, but is appeased by the augur's prayers, and spares him as a lion is contented with trampling on a fallen foe. In the upper world, the lamentation is long and loud. The Argives spend the night in weeping, the Thebans in festivity. A new augur is appointed, who conducts his predecessor's funeral, and sings a rhetorical hymn to the earth. The battle recommences; and we have one of those enumerations of slaughter which are natural in Homer, scarcely tolerable in Virgil, and insufferable in a less simple and more ambitious writer, the chief actor being Tydeus. The daughters of Œdipus are exchanging their sorrows in their chamber, when young Atys, who had been plighted to Ismene, is borne into the palace, having received his death-wound from the terrible Ætolian. At last, a Theban, Melanippus, succeeds in striking down Tydeus, though he is struck down by him in return. Tydeus begs his comrades to bring him his enemy's head, and, after gloating on it, is impelled by the Fury to gnaw it to the brain, just as Pallas was coming with Jupiter's permission to make him immortal. The pure goddess veils her face with the Gorgon shield, flies away with loathing, and leaves her fiendish favourite to die.

The Ninth Book opens amid the horror of the Thebans and the grief of the Argives and Polynices, who speaks of Tydeus's last action as prompted by excess of friendship to himself. There is a fight over the body, which would have been rescued by Hippomedon, had not the Fury, who has an interest in Tydeus remaining unburied, raised a false alarm that Adrastus is in the hands of the enemy.

Hippomedon, finding himself baffled, mounts the dead man's horse, and rides to the river Ismenus, where there is a furious combat, like the Homeric combat at the Scamander. The new Achilles, like his prototype, is in danger of being overwhelmed by the river-god, whose grandson he has killed. Juno begs that he may escape drowning, and Jupiter assents; but as soon as he has landed, he is overpowered and slain. Three of the Argive chiefs have now fallen, and a fourth is shortly to follow. The mother of Parthenopæus, away in Arcadia, forebodes the death of her son, and prays to her patroness, 'the huntress-queen.' Diana goes to Thebes, where Apollo consoles her by telling her that he has himself had to lose his votary, Amphiaraus: she resolves, however, to avenge her favourite's death, from whatever hand it may come. It is, as our readers will have seen already, the story of Camilla over again. The goddess does her best to make his career a splendid one, filling his quiver with heavenly shafts, and sprinkling him with ambrosia, which is to guard him against every wound but the last fatal one. After he has inflicted many deaths, she attempts to stop him from going further, but in vain; and meantime Venus, who had been viewing her interference with jealousy, sends down Mars to order her away. Parthenopæus is struck down, and expires with a rather touching address to his mother, which closes the book.

Another night follows: as before, the Argives are dispirited and the Thebans confident, insomuch that they contemplate a night attack on the quarters of the enemy. Meanwhile, the Argive matrons at home go in supplication to the temple of Pallas; and she resolves to trouble the Thebans, though she feels that she cannot conquer them. Accordingly, she sends down Iris to the cave of Sleep, which is elaborately described, and incites that

drowsy power to fall on the hosts of Thebes, while the Argives are to be kept wakeful. Adrastus is moved by the advice of Amphiaraus's successor, who has been favoured with a vision of Amphiaraus himself, to send out a small band against the sleeping foe; and the new augur, with two others, and a company of thirty men, offers himself for the service. Not content with thus copying the episode of Nisus and Euryalus, as Virgil copied that of Ulysses and Diomed, Statius has chosen to remind us yet more pointedly of the deeds and fate of the two Trojan friends. The expedition has succeeded and is retiring, when two members of it, Hopleus and Dymas, companions respectively of Tydeus and Parthenopæus, resolve to look for their leaders' bodies. They find them, and are going off, each with his prize, when they are discovered. Hopleus is killed: Dymas offers to forego life and burial for himself, if his young chief may be buried. He is offered his own life and the body of his chief if he will tell what the Argives are intending; but he will not sink to the level of the Homeric Dolon, and stabs himself on the spot, Statius expressing a hope that he and Hopleus will be welcomed as kindred spirits by Euryalus and Nisus. The Argives make a furious assault on the town, and the Thebans retire within the walls, which they defend desperately. There are murmurs against Eteocles, and Tiresias is bidden to tell the future. He replies that Thebes may be saved by the death of the youngest of the posterity of Cadmus. The goddess of Virtue or Worth, a somewhat strange personage to introduce into a Greek legend, inspires Menœceus, the youngest son of Creon, to offer himself willingly for his country. Pretending to his father that he does not mean to comply with the oracular voice, he mounts the walls, addresses the gods, stabs himself, sprinkles the towers with his

blood, and falls, not to the earth, but into the arms of Piety and Virtue, who waft his body gently down, while his spirit ascends to heaven. And now the poet girds himself to sing of the actions and death of Capaneus, and invokes the aid of all the Muses at once. That tremendous warrior climbs the walls, torch in hand, breaks off the battlements, and shatters Thebes with its own stones. The gods are in confusion, glaring at each other on each side of the throne of Jupiter. Capaneus dares them to hinder him: the sky darkens, but he presses on, declaring that the lightning will serve to rekindle his torch. A thunderbolt strikes him, and he begins to burn, first his crest, then his shield, and finally, his body; yet he still breathes defiance to heaven, and all but requires a second bolt to extinguish him.

The death of Capaneus is felt to be a relief, not only by the Thebans, but by the gods. They congratulate Jupiter as they did after his victory over the giants, and even the Thunderer feels respect for one who knew so well how to hold his own. Far from being thrust down to Tartarus, which we feel would have been his sentence had he fallen into the hands of Virgil, he is received with honour by the whole infernal world, and refreshes his august spirit at the Stygian streams. Meantime, two of the Furies agree to bring about a combat between the brothers. Polynices challenges Eteocles, and Eteocles accepts the challenge, after a quarrel with Creon, who taunts him with cowardice. Various attempts are made to stop the meeting: Jocasta flies to her son; Antigone, from the tower, calls to her brother; Adrastus protests, and finding himself unheeded, makes his way from the field back to Argos; the goddess of Piety comes down and urges the two armies to interpose, but is driven from the scene by the Fury, who shakes her serpents and

torches in her face. The combat is conducted like that in the 'Phœnissæ' of Euripides, except that, in Statius, Eteocles receives his death-wound first, and Polynices is stabbed while leaning over him and taking his spoils. Œdipus emerges from his cell, and insists on being taken to the bodies. He repents of the curses he has invoked, and says that natural piety has returned to him, which he shows by wishing that he had his eyes back to be pulled out again in sign of grief. Creon, who has succeeded to the throne, with the insolence of an upstart monarch, bids him leave Thebes. He replies indignantly, Antigone submissively, and they are allowed to withdraw to Cithæron. The Argives retire in confusion from the Theban territory, and the Eleventh Book ends.

The story is now exhausted, and it is not easy to see why the poet should have prolonged it, unless perhaps in compliance with the practice of his predecessors. But there is a class of readers who are curious to know the sequel of every tale, who wish for a sixth act to 'Hamlet,' and wonder what Edgar and Albany did after the death of Lear: and it may gratify these to find that Statius occupies a twelfth book with telling us that Creon buries his son magnificently, Eteocles obscurely, and Polynices not at all; that the widows of the Argive chiefs set out for Thebes to beg their husbands' bodies, but, on hearing of Creon's tyranny, turn aside to Athens, and implore the aid of Theseus; that Argia, Polynices' wife, goes to Thebes nevertheless, and is proceeding to lay out the corpse when she falls in with Antigone, who had come on the same errand; and that Theseus leads an army to Thebes, conquers it with little or no resistance, and kills Creon. The meeting of the husbandless wife and brotherless sister is strikingly told, and might have been admired had it occurred elsewhere: the conquering expedition of

Theseus is hurried over in a couple of hundred lines, as if it were a trifling episode. The poet himself seems to feel his mistake: he tells us that he cannot describe how the Argive ladies severally wailed their dead: it would be an extensive subject even for a new poem, and after his long voyage he wants to get into port. And so he takes leave of his work, which is already approved by Cæsar, and studied by the schoolboys of Italy, and will, he trusts, have an immortality of its own, though a less glorious one than that of the 'Æneid.'

Such is an outline of the principal work of a writer who, in the opinion of the elder Scaliger,[1] stands above all Greek and Roman epic poets, save Virgil alone; being superior to Homer in the quality of his verses, the number of his figures, the distribution of his characters, and the elaboration of his sentiments. To our readers, we fear, he will appear to have produced a medley of confused and exaggerated effects, crowding disproportioned incidents and overdrawn or underdrawn characters within the framework of a story, which may be a striking one, but which he did not invent, but borrow. He has been compared to Ovid, and with some justice, as both are apt to sacrifice taste to ingenuity, simplicity to show; but while Ovid, with all his faults, tells his tale excellently, Statius tells his indifferently. Nor can we agree with the praise which has been bestowed by two eminent critics, Mr. Hallam[2] and Mr. Merivale, on the structure of the 'Thebaid,' as though it had the advantage of other epic poems in unity and greatness of action. The March to Thebes is one thing, the Siege of Thebes another: the former interests us only as the preparation for the latter, and to spend half the poem on it is really to fall into the error of the writer, who, as we said earlier in this paper,

[1] *Poetics.* [2] *History of Literature of Europe.*

could not despatch that part of his subject under twenty-four books. It may be true that the incidents of the march formed a recognised portion of the Theban legend, and could as little be dispensed with in a traditional exposition of the story as the incidents of the siege; but while we admit that there may be an excuse for the fault, we must not speak as if the fault had not been committed.

Our limits do not allow us to give our readers as adequate a notion as we should wish of the style of Statius. There is a family likeness among most, if not all, of the writers of the silver age; point, terseness, clever condensation, are characteristic of them all; their fault is a want of simplicity and repose. These characteristic features Statius may be said to exaggerate and distort. Everything with him is, so to say, of the second intention; thoughts are locked up in epigrams, facts in allusions. The great masters of this art were, we need not say, the writers of the corresponding period of Greek cultivation, the school of Alexandria. When Lycophron wants to describe Heracles, he speaks of him as one whom a dead man killed with swordless guile. But Statius is hardly less successful in darkening his meaning, when, at the outset of his poem, he says [1] he shall content himself with speaking of the arms of Aonia, and the sceptre fatal to two kings, the fury that stopped not after death, and the flames that waged fresh war on the funeral pile, and the royal deaths that found no burial, and the cities that were drained by alternate carnage. Some-

[1] Satis arma referre
Aonia, et geminis sceptrum exitiale tyrannis,
Nec furiis post fata modum flammasque rebelles
Seditione rogi, tumulisque carentia regum
Funera et egestas alternis mortibus urbes.
Book i. 33 foll.

times, in interpreting him, we have to balance probabilities between his love of the obscure and his love of the horrible; as when he tells us that the sons of Œdipus trampled on their father's eyes as they fell from his head,[1] and we are left in doubt whether he means what he says, or whether it is merely his way of saying that the sons insulted their father's blindness. But we shall exemplify the qualities of his style best by analysing a very short passage. He is speaking of the Fury as she appears on earth:—[2]

> Centum illi stantes umbrabant ora cerastæ,
> Turba minor diri capitis: sedet intus abactis
> Ferrea lux oculis, qualis per nubila Phœbes
> Atracia rubet arte labor.

'A hundred uncoiled vipers shaded her brow, not half the multitude of that terrible head: deep in her sunken eyes sits an iron light, like as by Thessalian skill the agony of Phœbe glares red through the clouds.' We want our readers to observe the choice of the word 'cerastæ' for the common 'angues' or 'serpentes;' the enigmatical expression 'turba minor,' signifying that the snakes were innumerable, as one hundred was less than half their number; the boldness with which the light is called 'ferrea,' iron-red, and made to sit in the eyes; the exaggeration of speaking of the eyes as 'abacti,' driven away into the head; the novelty of making the labour of the moon look red, instead of the labouring moon herself; and the use of the recondite word 'Atracian,' from one of the tribes of Thessaly, for the ordinary word

[1] 'Nati, facinus sine more, cadentes calcavere oculos' (Book i. 238). There is a similar doubt about verse 72, 'miseraque oculos in matre reliqui,' which *may* only mean that Œdipus blinded himself at the time of his mother's death.

[2] Book i. 103 foll.

'Thessalian.' We do not mean to say that most of these might not be paralleled from other poets, but we think it will be admitted that the allowance of strange expressions is large for three lines and a half.

It would be too much to say that the style of the silver age is essentially ill adapted to the production of broad pictorial effects in narrative. We are at once confronted by the fact that Tacitus, the most graphic historian of Rome, perhaps of any nation, belongs, not only by accident of birth, but by the quality of his genius, emphatically to the silver age. His narrative may indeed be called, as Mr. Carlyle's has been called in our own day, history read by flashes of lightning; but that vivid and fitful intensity leaves a more distinct as well as more powerful impression on the mind than the equable moonlight glow of Livy. But Tacitus is enabled to produce this effect by the presence of that stern self-restraint which accompanies power of the highest class. The flashes of his genius are no mere idle coruscations, but obey a fixed law which makes each subservient to a general result. But for this restraining principle, we should have not a history, but a series of epigrams. And this restraining principle is precisely what Statius wants. The consequence is that we have a narrative which is full of short cuts and compendious expedients, and at the same time incredibly tedious. We are always out of breath, and yet seem never to arrive at our journey's end. The paradox of the arguers against motion is realised, and progress is shown to be impossible by the infinite divisibility of the ground which has to be passed over. Let us contrast the narrative of the 'Thebaid' for a few moments with the narrative of the 'Æneid,' choosing a place in the two stories where they really come into competition, the description of the prize-fight

in the funeral games. We must trust that our readers' recollection will supply them with the details in Virgil's account, while we endeavour to give them some notion of those in the tale as told by Statius.

As soon as Adrastus has proclaimed that the boxing-match is to begin, which he does by commending the prowess shown in boxing as 'bellis et ferro proxima virtus,' Capaneus rises like the Homeric Epeios or the Virgilian Dares, puts the lead-weighted gauntlets on hands as hard as they, and asks for an opponent, intimating that he would rather have had a Theban, whom he might fairly have killed, instead of being obliged to shed the blood of a citizen. Alcidamas, a young Spartan, rises at last, to the surprise of all but his compatriots, who know that he is a child of the palæstra, having been trained by Pollux:

> Ipse deus posuitque manus et brachia finxit
> Materiam (suadebat amor): tunc sæpe locavit
> Cominus, et simili stantem miratus in ira
> Sustulit exultans, nudumque ad pectora pressit.

The passage is not altogether easy; but we suppose the meaning to be that Pollux had moulded the rudimentary gristle of his young favourite into bone and muscle, had stood up with him repeatedly, and had been so charmed with his spirit and endurance as to catch him to his breast and embrace him then and there. Now let us think of Virgil's notice of Dares' victory over Butes, or Entellus's companionship with Eryx, and we shall be better able to appreciate this unseasonable attempt to interest us by minute word-painting in the antecedents of a personage on whom the eye is only meant to rest for a second or two. Capaneus is indignant, scornful, and affectedly contemptuous; at length, however, his languid

sinews swell, and he stands up to fight. They confront each other, the one like what Tityos would be if the birds would suffer him to rise; the other so young as to arrest the sympathies of the spectators, who tremble at the prospect of seeing him bleed:—

> Quem vinci haud quisquam, sævo nec sanguine tingi
> Malit, et erecto timeat spectacula voto.

At first they are prudent and cautious, sparring rather than hitting: 'explorant cæstus hebetantque terendo.' Alcidamas continues this Fabian policy, and keeps his fury in reserve, 'differet animum:' Capaneus becomes enraged, and expends both his hands recklessly: 'ambas consumit sine lege manus.' The young Spartan has the advantage, parrying his opponent's hits, while he sometimes goes into him (the word is Statius's own, 'intrat'), like a wave breaking on a rock, and finally plants a wound on his forehead. Capaneus hears the shout of the spectators, but is unconscious that blood has been drawn; at last, however, he puts up his hand to his brow, when the sight of the stains makes him more furious than a wounded lion; he rushes on Alcidamas, who is driven before him, preserving his coolness nevertheless:—

> Non tamen immemor artis,
> Adversus fugit, et fugiens tamen ictibus obstat.

The mad effort soon exhausts them both, and they pause to take breath; and the poet takes breath too in a short simile:—

> Sic ubi longa vagos lassarunt æquora nautas
> Et signo de puppi dato posuere parumper
> Brachia, vix requies, jam vox ciet altera remos.

The giant makes another rush, but his nimble adversary

first eludes him and then butts him over, 'sponte ruens mersusque humeris,' knocking him down again as he is rising, till he is alarmed at his own success. The Argives raise a shout which the shores and woods but faintly echo; but Adrastus sees that Capaneus is not beaten, but only made more dangerous, and interposes to prevent murder from being done:—

> Ite, oro, socii, furit: ite, opponite dextras,
> Festinate, furit, palmamque et præmia ferte:
> Non prius effracto quam misceat ossa cerebro
> Absistet, video: moriturum auferte Lacona.

Tydeus and Hippomedon with some difficulty hold Capaneus, telling him that he has conquered, and that it is graceful to spare a vanquished foe who happens to be an ally; but he thrusts aside the prize, and complains that he is not allowed to beat the minion to a mummy, and send him back thus to his patron. The Spartans welcome their champion, and indulge in a distant laugh at Capaneus's blustering; and so the scene is ended.

We feel that this summary has done but little justice to the real points of the narrative, which is at once far more ingenious, and for that reason possibly more tedious, than our plain prose can make it. Almost every line contains some terse, pointed expression; not a few of them are distinguished by graphic and picturesque touches, which we have been compelled to omit. Yet we cannot doubt what the verdict will be, if we now call upon our readers to decide between Statius and Virgil. The narrative in the 'Æneid' reflects the simple majesty of the veteran Entellus, rising modestly, only warming into passion, and finally retiring from the victorious field with a tribute to his patron, such as we can fancy Virgil paying to Homer. In Statius all is noise, glare, and confusion, whether we

attempt to sympathise with the baffled giant whom failure is turning into a fiend, or to join in the laugh with which his threats are received by the backers of his young opponent. Yet it is not the absence of art which makes Virgil what he is. Every line in him will bear examination; and every line will be seen upon examination to have been made conducive to the purpose of the entire narrative. Take for instance the figure of Dares; he is drawn with just sufficient definiteness to make him seem as a foil to Entellus; beyond that we are not intended to think of him either with sympathy or with aversion. He is dragged away from the scene as any other beaten combatant might be, his plight being represented in words translated from the description of the Homeric Euryalus. By a single word we are made to feel that his backers are beaten as well as their champion; it is only after having been *called*, 'vocati,' that they come and receive the prize for him; over everything else a veil is drawn, and we are not distracted by traits designed to individualise him or them. 'Semper ad eventum festinat' might be said of Virgil as truly as of Homer: but his haste is not hurry; he sees the goal before him, and can wait till he reaches it; he does not require to be always reassuring himself by some small piece of immediate success, like the hunters after applause complained of by Sir Walter Scott, who, not content with running swiftly down the stream, must needs taste the froth from every stroke of the oar. He can be summary when he pleases; no writer more effectively so; but he is not for ever calling our attention to the fact by those short sharp jerks which make us feel that the poet after all would have found his best employment in composing epigrammatic arguments for the several books of his own work, and remind us that in another generation or two the art of narrative composition at

Rome will culminate in such productions as Ausonius's Periochæ of the 'Iliad.'

But perhaps we shall give a better view of Statius, both in his weakness and in his strength, if we task the patience of our readers by quoting a passage *in extenso*. It is when Hypsipyle, after having been accosted by Adrastus, disclaims, like Nausicaa in the 'Odyssey' and Venus in the 'Æneid,' the divine character ascribed to her by her querist, and then guides him to the fountain, leaving the infant on the grass:—

Dixit, et orantis media inter anhelitus ardens
Verba rapit, cursuque animæ labat arida lingua.
Idem omnes pallorque viros, flatusque soluti
Oris habet: reddit demisso Lemnia vultu:
'Diva quidem vobis, et si cælestis origo est,
Unde ego? mortales utinam haud transgressa fuissem
Luctibus! altricem mandati cernitis orbam
Pignoris: at nostris an quis sinus, uberaque ulla,
Scit deus: et nobis regnum tamen, et pater ingens.
Sed quid ego hæc, fessosque optatis demoror undis?
Mecum age nunc, si forte vado Langia perennes
Servat aquas: solet et rapidi sub limite cancri
Semper, et Icarii quamvis juba fulgeret astri,
Ire tamen.' Simul hærentem, ne tarda Pelasgis
Dux foret, ah miserum vicino cespite alumnum,
(Sic Parcæ voluere,) locat, ponitque negantem
Floribus aggestis, et amico murmure dulces
Solatur lacrimas: qualis Berecynthia mater,
Dum circa parvum jubet exultare Tonantem
Curetas trepidos: illi certantia plaudunt
Orgia, sed magnis resonat vagitibus Ide.
At puer in gremio vernæ telluris, et alto
Gramine, nunc faciles sternit procursibus herbas
In vultum nitens; caram modo lactis egeno
Nutricem clangore ciens, iterumque renidens,
Et teneris meditans verba illuctantia labris,
Miratur nemorum strepitus, aut obvia carpit,

Aut patulo trahit ore diem: nemorisque malorum
Inscius, et vitæ multum securus inerrat.
Sic tener Odrysia Mavors nive, sic puer ales
Vertice Mænalio, talis per littora reptans
Improbus Ortygiæ latus inclinabat Apollo.

At first we seem to meet with nothing but misplaced ingenuity. The thought of calling attention to the parched tongues and panting breath of Adrastus and his comrades might have occurred to Ovid, but would not have occurred to Virgil, especially as the speech which Adrastus has just delivered by no means reminds us of the gasping utterance of physical distress, being, like all Statius's speeches, epigrammatic and rhetorical. Nor is Hypsipyle's reply expressed in the terms which would be most appropriate to the comprehension of thirsty men. To talk to persons in such a condition about the orphaned nurturer of an intrusted pledge, who knows not whether her own children have any breasts to suck, is to stipulate that before receiving relief they shall guess an enigma. Even when she comes to speak of water she cannot refrain from astronomical and mythological details, Cancer and the mane of the Icarian star. After this the description becomes only pleasing and graceful; we are charmed with the picture of the nurse laying down the child and soothing its crying, and we do not resent the comparison to Cybele and the infant Jupiter, though we feel it to be somewhat ambitious. Virgil might have said this, or something like this, just as before taking Cupid to Dido's palace he gives us a momentary glimpse of Ascanius in Idalia. But with the end of the paragraph Virgil would have stopped. Statius, on the contrary, feels that his chance of displaying his talent has come, and he will not forego it. Thus we have the picture, an exceedingly pretty one, of the babe propelling itself along the grass face foremost, crying for

its nurse, and then laughing and talking broken words, wondering at the forest noises, pulling to pieces what falls in its way, and taking in the breath of heaven through its parted lips. It is beauty out of place, but it is beauty still. The simile, or congeries of similes, that follows, is more questionable. After having heard of the infant Jupiter among the Curetes, we do not care to hear of the infant Mars in the snow, or the infant Mercury on the mountain-top; still less can we be said to require to have our apprehension assisted by the grotesque, if ingenious, portrait of the infant Apollo crawling along Delos, and nearly turning it over on its side.

When we examine the 'Thebaid' as a whole, we can only speak of it as a monument of misused power. It is only when we contemplate it in its parts that we see evidences of power directed towards an object, attaining to it, and resting in it. Every ingenious expression might be regarded in this way as a result gained: it is bad if viewed as a means; good if viewed as an end. But to criticise a work of art in this spirit is not to criticise at all; it is, in fact, to turn the ordered hierarchy of poetical creation into anarchy and chaos. There are, however, parts which are more capable than others of being regarded apart from the whole, even though we may feel that a censure on the poet is involved in the very act of so regarding them. The description of the infant which we have just quoted is one of these. But there are some which stand so completely in a class by themselves as to deserve a few words of separate commemoration. We allude to the similes of the poem. Two or three of them we have incidentally cited or referred to already; others will be familiar to the reader of Copleston's 'Prælectiones Academicæ,' where it is well remarked that their details, even when irrelevant, are often pleasing from their exceed-

ingly natural character. As parts of the narrative they are sometimes felt to be excrescences: as pieces of independent description they are well worth studying. The poet evidently liked them himself: he is never tired of introducing them; indeed, there is scarcely a page without them. We will quote a very few of them, rendering them more or less closely into English. Here is one from a tiger:—[1]

> Qualis ubi audito venantum murmure tigris
> Horruit in maculas somnosque excussit inertes,
> Bella cupit, laxatque genas, et temperat ungues,
> Mox ruit in turmas natisque alimenta cruentis
> Spirantem fert ore virum: sic excitus ira
> Ductor in absentem consumit prœlia fratrem.[2]

'As when a tigress, on hearing the horn of the hunters, has bristled her spotted skin, and shaken off the sloth of slumber, she yearns for battle, and eases her stiff jaws, and trims her talons; soon she rushes among the companies, and carries off in her mouth a living man to feed her savage whelps: so, stirred up with wrath, the prince squanders deeds of arms on his absent brother.' The Theban general is compared to a shepherd:—[3]

> Perspicuas sic luce fores et virgea pastor
> Claustra levat, dum terra recens: jubet ordine primos
> Ire duces, media stipantur plebe maritæ:
> Ipse levat gravidas et humum tactura parentum
> Ubera, succiduasque apportat matribus agnas.

[1] Book ii. 128 foll.

[2] 'Horruit in maculas' seems to mean no more than what we have made it mean. Addison, however (*Spectator*, No. lxxxi.), applying it to the patches worn in his day, says it is reported of the tigress that several spots rise in her skin when she is angry, and quotes an imitation by Cowley—

> She swells with angry pride,
> And calls forth all her spots on every side.

[3] Book vii. 393 foll.

'Thus the shepherd opens at daybreak the transparent door-work and the wattled enclosures, while there is freshness abroad on the earth; he bids the rams lead the way; the mediate throng crowds on the ewes; with his own hand he supports those heavy with young, and lifts the udders which would else sweep the ground, and brings to the mothers their dropping lambs.' Human as well as animal life is made to furnish comparisons. The newly-chosen successor of Amphiaraus reminds the poet of a young Persian monarch:—[1]

> Sicut Achæmenius solium gentesque paternas
> Excepit si forte puer, cui vivere patrem
> Tutius, incerta formidine gaudia librat,
> An fidi proceres, ne pugnet vulgus habenis,
> Cui latus Euphratæ, cui Caspia limina mandet.
> Sumere tunc arcus ipsumque onerare veretur
> Patris equum, visusque sibi nec sceptra capaci
> Sustentare manu nec adhuc implere tiaram.

'Even as when the heir of Achæmenes succeeds to the throne and the peoples that were his father's, himself a mere boy, for whom it had been safer were his father still alive, he wavers between the flutterings of joy and fear—Can the nobles be trusted? Will the common herd rebel against the yoke? To whom must he commit the frontier of Euphrates? To whom the gates of the Caspian? He is too modest to bend his father's bow or make his father's steed feel his weight; he cannot think his hand yet strong enough for the sceptre, or his brow large enough for the tiara.' Following Virgil, he draws, as we have seen, similes from mythology, but with a much less sparing hand. The joy of Œdipus on emerging from his

[1] Book viii. 286 foll.

solitude is paralleled with that of Phineus when freed from his Harpy tormentors:—[1]

> Qualis post longæ Phineus jejunia pœnæ,
> Nil stridere domi volucres ut sensit abactas,
> Necdum tota fides, hilaris mensasque torosque
> Nec turbata feris tractavit pocula pennis.

'Even as Phineus, when his long penal fast was over, soon as he perceived the birds driven off, and no screeching at his doors, ere he wholly credited his bliss, handled gaily board and couch and winecups, unturmoiled by those fierce-flapping wings.' And there is surely some grandeur, if there is some exaggeration, in the comparison of the flight of Adrastus from Thebes to the first entrance of Pluto into his infernal realm,[2] a sort of anticipation of the Satan of Milton:—

> Qualis
> Demissus curru lævæ post præmia sortis
> Umbrarum custos mundique novissimus heres
> Palluit, amisso veniens in Tartara cælo.

'As when, dismounting from his car, after the award of the luckless lot, the warden of the shades, the last sharer of the world's inheritance, grew pale as he entered Tartarus, and felt that heaven was lost.'

Mr. Merivale has observed with much justice that Statius is a miniature painter employed by the caprice of a patron or his own unadvised ambition on a great historical picture. Such exaggerations as his are indeed the fruit of weakness quite as often as of ill-regulated strength. The commonplace aspects of a monstrous story may be seized by any quick apprehension, and reproduced by any fertile fancy: it is only high genius that can render them

[1] Book viii. 255 foll. [2] Book xi. 443 foll.

human and credible. Dryden[1] compares Statius to his own Capaneus engaging the two immortals Virgil and Homer, and reaping the fruit of his daring. We would rather compare him to his own Atys,[2] the plighted husband of Ismene, who is slain by the mighty arm of Tydeus. The love of his Theban bride leads him into war; he challenges the champion of the field, and falls at the first shock; and he lies in death pale and bloody, yet in the pride of youthful beauty and golden armour.

[1] 'Discourse on Epic Poetry,' prefixed to the *Æneid.*
[2] Book viii. 555 foll.

THE LATER ROMAN TRAGEDY—SENECA.[1]

In passing from the tragedians of the Roman Republic, we feel that the gates of a heroic age are being closed upon us. It is not merely that they, more fortunate than their successors, though reduced to silence themselves, found a Cicero to recount their triumphs: the less willing testimony of Horace speaks sufficiently to the unrivalled popularity which they enjoyed in the Augustan era; and the references made to them by later writers, scanty as they are, seem to show that no tragic poet arose after them whose authority was so generally recognised by the critical taste of posterity. There is certainly no one, of course with the exception of Seneca, of whose works we know so much. We hear, indeed, the names of many subsequent tragedians, but we hear scarcely anything more. A few of them are mentioned by Tacitus, as having been in some way or other involved in the history of the time; a few of them find a place in the Satires of Juvenal, to be ridiculed for their imbecility, or pitied for their needy circumstances. Some were men known in other walks of life, like Q. Cicero, Asinius Pollio, and the Emperors Augustus and Nero; others, like Ovid, Lucan, and Statius, have left behind them more durable monuments of their power and skill in poetry. It may be that one kind of reputation has eclipsed the other; it may be that the author of one or two plays had but a poor chance for posthumous fame as compared with

[1] Printed from the MS. of a Lecture delivered at Oxford in 1857.

the authors of thirty or forty. But however it may be accounted for, the fact is still there; the accredited remains of these poets altogether do not amount to five and thirty lines, and there are probably not more than four or five on whose works contemporary or succeeding critics have pronounced any opinion.

Of these ἀμένηνα κάρηνα, however, two at least seem to have been of sufficient importance in their day to claim a passing notice. We know hardly anything of the plays of Varius and Pomponius Secundus; but the testimonies of those who had an opportunity of reading them, induce us to believe the first to have been really eminent, the second more than respectable.

The name of L. Varius Rufus is familiar to all readers of Virgil and Horace, who evidently regarded him as one of the most illustrious members of their poetical brotherhood, the former not specifying the kind of poetry which had won him his fame, the latter talking of him as an epic writer, and (incidentally at least) an eulogist of Augustus. Other authors, however, appear to have been more struck with a single tragedy written by him on the well-worn subject of 'Thyestes.' 'The "Thyestes" of Varius,' says Quintilian, 'may stand a comparison with any of the Greek tragedies'—praise doubtless to be accepted with some qualification, but sufficiently high nevertheless. It is mortifying to think that, as in the case of Ennius, we can almost trace the casualty which took away from us the means of judging for ourselves. The play is lost, but its title-page is still extant. Nearly twenty years ago, a scholium was printed from a Paris MS. of the eighth century, which, if not actually forming part of a copy of the play, was probably itself copied from one. It opens in the well-known manner, 'Incipit Thuestes Varii,' and goes on with a sort of didascalia or historical notice,

'Lucius Varius cognomento Rufus Thyesten tragœdiam magna cura absolutam post Actiacam victoriam Augusti ludis ejus in scena edidit. Pro qua fabula sestertium deciens accepit.' The care bestowed on the composition of the tragedy—the occasion of its representation, namely, the rejoicings after the battle of Actium, and the remuneration received by the author, a million of sesterces—such are the facts which were intended to prepare us for a perusal. And now all that we actually possess of this elaborate and highly successful work is a couple of half lines, in which Atreus talks of his unspeakable injuries as forcing him to an unspeakable retaliation: 'Jam fero infandissima, jam facere cogor.' Possibly we may add to this morsel two anapæstic fragments, one of them quoted by a metrical writer, Marius Victorinus, to illustrate a strange theory about the stationariness of the Chorus in singing as symbolising the stationariness of the earth while the heaven is in motion; the other, cited by an old commentator on Virgil's 'Eclogues,' apropos to Corydon's lamentation over his half-pruned vine. In any case it is not easy to see the ground of Niebuhr's criticism on the supposed characteristics of the play. 'I fear,' he says, 'that his manner was too declamatory, and that his "Thyestes" bore the same relation to the ancient Attic tragedian that Virgil's "Æneid" bears to the Homeric epics. This and all the later tragedies of the Romans were not, like those of Pacuvius and Attius, imitations of the Attic dramas, but were based upon the models of the Alexandrian period. The tragedies of what was called the "Pleias" were of a very different character from the ancient Attic tragedies; and we may form a tolerably correct notion of them by looking at the productions of Seneca, which are not ancient Greek, and cannot be Roman. I would rather have had Varius' poem "De Morte" than his

tragedy.' No doubt it is likely that Varius, like Virgil, may have had his eye on Alexandrian models, as well as on the more ancient masterpieces of Greece. But is it to such a spirit of imitation that the un-Homeric character of the 'Æneid' is mainly due, and not rather to the peculiarities of the author and to the impossibility of reproducing the Homeric epic in the Augustan age? and is not the Augustan age more nearly parallel to the age of Pericles than the last two centuries of the Republic, when Pacuvius and Attius wrote? Of course it may be said of a Roman poem on a Greek legend that it is not ancient Greek, and cannot be Roman; but a proposition like this does not help us to bridge over the chasm which we know separates Seneca from Virgil, and, we feel, may also have separated him from Varius. Seneca, writing for no stage but that of the study or the school, may have drunk more or less deeply of the springs of Alexandrian rhetoric. How far Varius did so is a question which must have depended on the character of his own genius, and is hardly soluble by a reference to the general features of the period, which need not have been unfavourable to the imitation of Sophocles or Euripides, as it certainly receives no appreciable light from the fragment or fragments of the 'Thyestes.'

Pomponius Secundus (the prænomen is variously given) was a person of considerable distinction in his time, the time of Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius. He shared in the fall of Sejanus, whose friend he had been, but lived to obtain the consulship, and later still to gain a victory over the barbarian Chatti, for which he received the triumphal ornaments. Pliny the Elder was warmly attached to him, and wrote his life in two books. Tacitus, who mentions him more than once in his 'Annals,' in his dialogue on orators, instances the reputation he enjoyed in life as a proof that poetry confers at least as much distinction on

a man as eloquence. But the only definite judgment on his characteristics as a tragic poet, which has come down to us, is one reported by Quintilian, who calls him far the most eminent tragic writer with whom he had been contemporary, adding that the critics of a former generation thought him wanting in the pure tragic element, while acknowledging his erudition and poetical brilliancy. The few fragments which have been preserved from his plays will perhaps enable us to understand what is meant by the last-named qualities. His erudition seems to be proved by some peculiarities of language, which have caused him to be quoted by Charisius and Nonius—the use of *humile* as the ablative of *humilis*, the adoption of the orthography *omneis* in the accusative as distinguished from *omnes* in the nominative plural, the invention, if invention it were, of the word *notifico*, and the employment of *ascendibilis semita* as a poetical periphrasis for a scaling-ladder. These specimens of phraseology would lead us to suppose that he imitated the older tragedians, and the structure of the two lines which are extant, as remnants of his dialogues, iambic and trochaic, would confirm the supposition. Brilliancy is perhaps an exaggerated term to apply to the solitary piece of continuous writing which has been quoted from him—four anapæsts, not amounting to a complete sentence, on a harp which makes music with the woods and the meandering river, but they have certainly a poetical turn, in spite of some harshness of rhythm:—

> Pendeat ex humeris dulcis chelys,
> Et numeros edat varios quibus
> Adsonet omne virens late nemus
> Et tortis errans qui flexibus.

And now at last we may congratulate ourselves on having passed from conjectures to certainties—from frag-

ments short and far between to entire plays. Of the ten tragedies bearing the name of Seneca, one, the 'Thebais,' or 'Phœnissæ,' is grievously mutilated. The last act lost, the others headless or tailless, or both, and the intervening choruses swept away—a reduction probably amounting to one-half; but the remaining nine are complete, and the total aggregate, 11,652 lines, gives us as ample an opportunity as criticism could desire of judging of these, the first and last surviving children of the Roman Melpomene.

With respect, indeed, to the authorship of these plays, there is still room for doubt and speculation. The MSS. give them to Annæus Seneca, but the prænomen assigned appears to fluctuate between Lucius and Marcus. The testimony of the ancient writers, again, is rather equivocal. The 'Medea,' the 'Troades,' the 'Hercules Furens,' the 'Hippolytus,' and the 'Thyestes,' are all quoted as Seneca's, the first by Quintilian, the others by later authors, but without any intimation that the poet is the same as the philosopher. Sidonius Apollinaris, in the fifth century, expressly distinguishes them as different members of the same family, in lines which show that if the generation in which he lived had preserved the traditions of Roman biography, it had, at any rate, lost those of Greek quantity:—

> Quorum unus colit hispidum Platona,
> Incassumque suum monet Neronem:
> Orchestram quatit alter Euripidis.

and a later witness, Paulus Diaconus, a contemporary of Charlemagne, is quoted on the same side. On the other hand, those who speak of Seneca the philosopher do not mention that he wrote tragedies. But it is very possible that the poetical studies of which Tacitus speaks as having excited the jealousy of Nero, were no other than these

very plays; and though Quintilian, in reserving a conspicuous place for Seneca at the end of his well-known chapter on the writers of Greece and Rome, merely instances poems among other proofs of his versatility, the enumeration is too rapid and too casual for us to wonder at the absence of any more formal notice of works which the critic certainly did not put on a level with the best dramas of his day. The plays themselves, if I may trust my own judgment, are such as we may well conceive to have been written by the philosopher. There is the same sparkle and point, with the same deficiency of feeling and reality—the same ambition of display, straining after exaggerated effects and delighting in high-flown sentiments—the same combination, as Schlegel well puts it, of tedious prolixity and conciseness passing into obscurity—one common-place thought generating a hundred enigmatic epigrams—which cannot but force itself on the attention even of one whose acquaintance with the prose works of Seneca is as slight as my own. In the tragedies, no less than in the epistles and moral treatises, we see what it was which led the Emperor Caligula, who, if he was a madman, was also sometimes a wit, to speak of Seneca's style as sand without lime; what it was that suggested to A. Gellius, on the authorities whom he quotes, the happy expression 'ineptus inanisque impetus'—a violent effort, without object or propriety. Of course, it is still possible that the poet and the philosopher may be distinct, and that the internal evidence in favour of their identity may be only a proof of family likeness, such as certainly existed between Seneca and his nephew, the poet Lucan; but at any rate it may be said that there is no conclusive argument which makes their identity incredible. One of the plays, indeed, separated from the rest by its subject, the 'Octavia,' actually introduces the

philosopher as one of its *dramatis personæ*, and there is external ground for supposing that it may have been the work of some other author, since it is not contained in the oldest manuscript, the Florentine, while the style, though certainly not unlike Seneca's, may perhaps, to a minute observer, reveal some points of difference, apart from those involved in the character of the play. It is not inconceivable in itself that Seneca, having followed, and, as he possibly thought, surpassed the Greeks in nine of his tragedies, chose for the tenth a subject more nearly concerning himself, at once pleasing himself with the thought of being the author of a *prætexta*, and satisfying an impulse of another kind by the production of a work which might seem as an apology for his connexion with Nero; but it seems safe to conclude that in this instance, and in this only, the work of some imitator of the philosophic tragedian may have been confounded by later judges, critical or uncritical, with those of the philosophic tragedian himself. At any rate, there seems no reason, external or internal, for dividing the authorship of the nine other plays. The extraordinary diversity of opinion which has prevailed, especially among the earlier critics, with regard to their merits, as compared with each other, is a thing which, to my perception at least, is simply unaccountable.

Daniel Heinsius distributed the ten plays among no less than five authors, giving the 'Troades,' 'Hippolytus,' and 'Medea,' which he considered the best, to the philosopher; Lipsius thought he traced four authors, one of them being the philosopher, another a still greater genius of the Augustan age, but with him the 'Troades,' so far from being one of the best, is contrasted with the 'Thebais,' his first favourite, which Heinsius had placed nowhere. Even Bernhardy, supposing them to be the work of a rhetorical school of writers, makes a marked distinction between

play and play, praising the 'Troades' for its powerful though luxuriant rhetoric, and admitting that the 'Thyestes,' the 'Hippolytus,' and the 'Hercules Furens,' contain many excellent things, while he finds mere empty prate in the 'Œdipus' and the 'Agamemnon,' and resolves the 'Hercules Œtæus' into wind and vapour. I confess it appears to me that the same characteristics, favourable or unfavourable, may be discovered in all. All are written alike in that elaborate antithetical style, terse in individual expressions, yet diffuse in its general effect, which is the common property of the post Augustan rhetorical school, both in prose and verse: in all alike the sentiments are exaggerated, the passions swelled to bursting, the horror which is involved in the catastrophe drawn out into sickening detail: in all alike the dialogue is declamatory or didactic, the choruses made up of commonplaces, moral or mythological—a caricature of the Greek drama, in which uniformity of structure becomes shapeless monotony, and simplicity of evolution passes into the absence of all movement.

Of course you will not expect that I should verify this criticism in detail by an examination of all the ten plays. If you will allow me, however, I should be glad to single out three of them of which I propose to give such an account as may enable you to judge for yourselves what their characteristics are. It is difficult to make a choice; but I think I shall not do wrong if I name the 'Medea,' the 'Thyestes,' and the 'Octavia'—the first, as offering itself at once for comparison with one of the best known of the Greek plays; the second for the opposite reason, as showing how Seneca can treat a subject which, though often handled by the ancients, is untouched so far as our imaginations are concerned; the third, as exhibiting to us the same powers, if they are the same, in yet another

field, and as affording, with all its drawbacks, the only specimen of a Roman drama or a Roman story.

You all remember the opening of the 'Medea' of Euripides, with what skilful indirectness we are informed of her wrongs, first by the conversation of her servants, and afterwards by her own agonized exclamations, uttered at intervals behind the scenes, and not intended for our hearing, till at last, when our minds have been sufficiently prepared, she appears herself on the stage, and we recognise not only the injured wife, but the woman of commanding intellect, dilating on the sufferings of her oppressed sex, and leading the Chorus to feel, even where she disclaims the thought, that their cause is the same as hers. Seneca, ignoring or disdaining such artificial approaches to our sympathies, attempts to take them by storm, by at once introducing his heroine, and that not as she would appear, comparatively self-controlled in the presence of others, but in all the abandonment of solitary passion. With a studied minuteness which may perhaps be excused as in keeping with the character of a practised enchantress, she invokes all the gods whom Jason's perfidy has made her friends, each by his proper mythological attribute. The goddess who taught Tiphys to navigate the Argo, and the mistress of the gloomy realms below, like herself, a ravished bride, but not, like herself, foully betrayed. She implores the Sun, her father, to lend her his chariot, that she may set the Isthmus of Corinth on fire, and make the two seas run into one; she recalls the crimes of her Colchian days, and declares that the deeds of a mother ought to outdo those of a maid, and that her divorce ought to be signalized no less than her marriage—

> Effera, ignota, horrida,
> Tremenda cœlo pariter ac terris mala,

Mens intus agitat; vulnera, et cædem, et vagum
Funus per artus. Levia memoravi nimis.
Hæc virgo feci: gravior exsurgat dolor:
Majora jam me scelera post partus decent.
Accingere ira, teque in exitium para
Furore toto: paria narrentur tuis
Repudia thalamis. Quo virum linquis modo?
Hoc, quo secuta es. Rumpe jam segnes moras:
Quæ scelere parta est, scelere linquenda est domus.

After fifty-five lines like these, a Chorus of Corinthian women enters, to sing the epithalamium of Jason and Creusa, an ode composed of asclepiads, glyconics, and hexameters, not intermixed but successive, and consisting of invocations like those in the preceding speech, only in a different spirit, of compliments to the happy pair, she being preferred to all Athenian and Spartan women, he even to Bacchus, Apollo, Castor, and Pollux, and allusions, not very apt, to the customs of a Roman wedding. In the Second Act we have 'Medea' again, not alone, but with the nurse, her confidant, a personage not unknown to the Athenian stage, but less frequent there than in these tragedies, where he or she (for the sexes vary) constitutes an ordinary, though not an indispensable, part of the play, an introduction owing partly to the decreasing importance of the Chorus, which, while preserving its fair numerical proportion so far as its odes are concerned, bears but little share in the dialogue, partly to the increasing taste for rhetoric which made it necessary that the chief speaker should have some recognised person to draw out, if not to meet and rebut, his arguments. Medea has heard the bridal song, and is thrown into a fresh tempest of indignation; she execrates Jason, wishes he had a brother whom she could tear in pieces, as she once tore in pieces her own for his sake, reminds herself that he has a wife, and once more recalls the

slaughters through which she has waded; then a change of feeling succeeds, and she throws the whole blame on Creon, who has broken the marriage tie with his sceptre, and separated the mother from her children. The nurse attempts to restrain her by the general consideration (a strange one, certainly, to think of here) that anger, when loud, wastes itself, and that vengeance, to be effective, should be silent. An encounter of wits follows, in the course of which occurs a passage often quoted to show both that Seneca can say a striking thing, and that when he has said it he cannot leave it alone. The nurse has pointed to Medea's forlorn condition :—

> Abiere Colchi: conjugis nulla est fides,
> Nihilque superest ossibus e tantis tibi.

She answers with a momentary flash of the sublime, vanishing the next instant into rhetorical vapour :—

> Medea superest: hic mare et terras vides,
> Ferrumque et ignes et deos et fulmina.

While they are retorting on each other, the door creaks, and Creon enters. The dialogue which follows is the first part of the play in which Seneca and Euripides come into direct competition. The two scenes substantially occupy the same ground, and both are abundantly characteristic of their authors. Euripides, true to that conception of his heroine which makes her character especially interesting to us, as embodying the thoughts and feelings of the poet himself, puts into her mouth a vindication of wise people against the suspicions of their less advanced contemporaries; Seneca seizes on the opportunity thus, as he doubtless thought, left open to allow Medea to plead her whole cause before Creon, as the preserver of the Argo, and so the general bene-

factress of Greece. To help the afflicted, she urges on Creon, is the one privilege which royalty can count on securing as its own—it is the one recollection which remains to her now in the wreck of all her queenly state:—

> Solum hoc Colchico regno extuli,
> Decus illud ingens, gloriæ florem inclitum,
> Præsidia Achivæ gentis et prolem deûm,
> Servâsse memet. Munus est Orpheus meum,
> Qui saxa cantu mulcet et silvas trahit:
> Geminique munus Castor et Pollux meum,
> Satique Borea: quique trans Pontum quoque
> Summota Lynceus lumine immisso videt:
> Omnesque Minyæ: nam ducum taces ducem
> Pro quo nihil debetur: hunc nulli imputo:
> Vobis revexi ceteros, unum mihi.

All the rest she takes credit for, full credit—for Orpheus, who can make the rocks follow him, for Castor and Pollux, and the sons of Boreas, for Lynceus, whose keen eyes can see beyond the Euxine, and all the Minyæ; for Jason alone she claims no payment. The upshot of the dialogue is the same in both cases; Medea is allowed one day longer, a boon which in Euripides is conceded to her reluctantly, in Seneca flung to her haughtily, though she tells Creon she could do with less. Seneca's Chorus, still taking no part in the action, sings another song, on the voyage of the Argo, censuring, after Horace, the boldness of the undertaking, enlarging on the ignorance of the heavenly bodies which previously prevailed, detailing the acts of seamanship which Tiphys had to perform for the first time, the unfurling and shifting of the sails and the like, contrasting the contented happiness of the golden age, recounting the sufferings of the sailors for their presumption, their encounters with Scylla and the Sirens, the last of whom,

nstead of leading away the Argonauts, were nearly led away themselves by Orpheus, and at length concluding in a very modern spirit about the present facilities of navigation, and the probability of finding out new countries—a prophecy, so some have been pleased to regard it, of the discovery of America, while others see in it merely a historical allusion, couched in exaggerated language, to the British expedition of Claudius. In the Third Act, another scene with the confidant merely enables Medea to utter more rhetoric—to assure us that while the revolutions of nature, which are carefully specified, continue to go on, her rage shall remain unabated, more terrible than Scylla, Charybdis, or Mount Ætna, with a violence which neither torrent, nor stormy ocean, nor fire, may restrain. Next comes an interview with Jason, where again Seneca offers himself for comparison with Euripides, though he has compressed into a single conversation what with his predecessor furnishes matter for two, so that Medea in one and the same scene gives reins to her passion as an injured wife, and with a sudden accession of dissimulation, asks for reconciliation and forgiveness—a transition which, whether natural or no, could have become plausible only in the hands of a more skilful artist. The declaration, as usual, is tedious, Medea taking pains to enumerate one by one the services which she rendered Jason in Colchis; the dialogue is smart enough. 'What charge can you bring against me?' asks Jason. 'Objicere crimen quod potes tandem mihi?' 'Quodcunque fui' is her retort.

J.—Quid facere possim, eloquere. *M.*—Pro me? vel scelus.

J.—Hinc rex, et illinc. *M.*—Est et his major metus, Medea.

The scene being over, the Chorus, who, for anything we

know, may not have been present during the interview, sings a Sapphic ode, pronouncing the rage of an injured wife to be more vehement than the Danube, the Ister, or the torrents of Mount Hæmus, and trusting that Jason may be more fortunate than his fellow-voyagers, whose untimely ends are severally recounted. The Fourth Act is an Act of magical incantation, partly narrated by the nurse, and partly performed by Medea herself on the stage. Seneca has taken the circumstance of the presents which are to be despatched to the rival bride, though he has ignored the occasion for sending them, and seizes the opportunity of showing his learning and his power of accumulating horrors. The nurse goes through the whole catalogue of evil agencies, the various deadly serpents, the various noxious plants, all elaborately enumerated and discriminated geographically. Medea evokes the tortured ghosts from Tartarus, all of whom are to have a respite from their sufferings that they may assist her, except Sisyphus, who is Creon's father; she tells over her various charms, each of which is a relic of some legendary horror; she invokes Hecate, showing that all the proscribed rites have been performed, the bloody turf pulled up, the brand snatched from the funeral pile, the sepulchral fillet put on, the branch of the Stygian tree waved. Once more the Chorus sings, more briefly and more appositely than usual, expressing their alarm at Medea's appearance, though they take no notice of the proceedings in which she has just been engaged, and wishing this last day of her stay were well over. And now the Fifth Act brings the crisis. If in the Fourth Act Seneca has been loquacious where Euripides was silent, their mutual relations are now reversed. Instead of that well-known description, so fearful, yet so graceful, of the deaths of Creusa and Creon, we hear briefly, in a dialogue which, for the first

and last time, is joined by the Chorus, that the royal pair are destroyed 'fraude qua solent reges capi, Donis,' and that the fire has consumed the palace, threatens the city, and is not quenched but fed by water. It is then that Medea, in the height of her triumph, after gloating on her various crimes, past as well as present, is made to debate with herself the question of killing her children. The alternations of feeling are drawn somewhat after the manner of Euripides, but condensed into rhetorical points, and sometimes pushed into mere extravagance, as when in the access of a fury-fit she wishes that, like Niobe, she had fourteen children to be killed: 'Sterilis in pœnas fui.' Nor is there much nature in the supposed appearance of the Furies, attended by her brother's spirit, who cries for vengeance. Even after Jason appears, she hesitates; she has killed one child, but doubts about sparing the other. Jason's entreaties decide her; she tells him that if she could have spared one, both might have been spared, and that if there is any babe yet unborn, that shall be slain too. At last she ends the suspense, throws down the corpses, and flies away in her winged chariot, while Jason cries after her that the heaven where she is soaring must be uninhabited by gods.

> Per alta vade spatia sublimi ætheris:
> Tartara nullos esse, qua veheris, deos.

To furnish a suitable commencement to the 'Thyestes,' the infernal world is thrown open, Tantalus being brought up by Megæra, that he may excite his posterity to greater atrocities. If it were ever desirable to put such machinery into motion, a fitting occasion would certainly seem to be furnished by a story, which, however treated, must, for pure revolting horror, have surpassed any of the extant themes of ancient tragedy; yet if we compare the open-

ing of the 'Agamemnon' of Æschylus with that of the 'Agamemnon' of Seneca, where the spirit of Thyestes is evoked to perform an office similar to that which is here performed by the spirit of Tantalus, we can hardly doubt that a poet of the old school would have devised some more human introduction to a tale of human cruelty. Æschylus does not shrink from the supernatural where, as in the 'Eumenides,' it is involved in the very conception of his subject; on the contrary, he wields it with a terrible power which throws the mere human side of the narrative into the shade; but for that very reason he does not put it wantonly into requisition, wherever wickedness may seem to require an external motive, or the crimes or wrongs of the dead appear to make themselves felt by the living. Euripides is perhaps less scrupulous; at least, there is some resemblance between the appearance of Iris and Lytta, the Frenzy-fiend, in the 'Hercules Furens,' and that of Megæra and Tantalus here, though the Greek poet supplies no parallel to the rhetorical extravagances of the Roman. Tantalus asks why he was summoned from his ordinary punishment? whether to new tortures, such as those of Sisyphus, Ixion, or Tityus, which he severally characterises. When told of the work he is to do, he attempts to escape, and offers to suffer any evil himself rather than be the cause of fresh evil to others. But he is sent into the palace, while his tormentor describes rhetorically the effect of his temporary presence on earth in the drying up of the rivers and the ocean, the withering of the trees, and the disorder of the sun. The Chorus, composed of aged Argives, pray that their country, the topographical features of which are touched at some length, may be less stained by crime than in former generations, and give a brief sketch of Tantalus's offence, and a more elaborate picture of his punishment. The Second Act

introduces us to Atreus and a male confidant, or, as he is called in the list of *dramatis personæ*, Satelles. Atreus endeavours to rouse himself to vengeance by reproaching himself for his inactivity, talks of a grand armed display, and tries to think of some crime worthy of the occasion:—

> Age, anime, fac quod nulla posteritas probet,
> Sed nulla taceat; aliquod audendum est nefas
> Atrox, cruentum: tale, quod frater meus
> Suum esse malit. Scelera non ulcisceris,
> Nisi vincis.

The confidant counsels virtuous thoughts: Atreus replies that virtuous thoughts are not for kings, and details his injuries in a speech which may very probably have been modelled on that fragmentary speech of the Atreus of Attius, referred to in my former lecture, ending by asking how Thyestes ought to be killed. 'Put him to the sword,' suggests the confidant. This gives Atreus the opportunity for a tyrannic utterance:—

> De fine pœnæ loqueris: ego pœnam volo:
> Perimat tyrannus lenis: in regno meo
> Mors impetratur.

No weapon, he declares, will serve against Thyestes, but Thyestes himself. He gropes his way to a conclusion, led on, he tells us, by a power not his own, while external nature is showing signs of convulsion. Taking a hint, which he duly acknowledges, from the story of Tereus, he resolves that his brother shall be made to eat the flesh of his own children; and the vision, once presented, becomes so clear to him that he wonders he can so long have been blind to it. The acquiescent confidant inquires how Thyestes can be got into his brother's power, listens to an explanation of ways and means, advises Atreus not to employ his own sons as ambassadors to their uncle, or at

least not to admit them into the secret, and finally, of course, promises secrecy, 'both for honour's sake and fear's sake, but rather for honour's.' The Chorus, having by some means or other heard that the family feud is composed, though unacquainted with Atreus' underlying plot, sings some glyconics against the common view of the attractions of royalty, and in support of the Stoical proposition that the real king is the king over himself. In the Third Act, Thyestes is introduced, talking to his sons about their uncle's proposal to share the kingdom with him. Like the Thyestes of Attius, he is inclined to distrust the offer; but the language which he uses could only have come from a Stoic rhetorician. He prefers the humble life which he is leaving to a throne, says that a man is a king when he has the power to die, and that to be able to live without a kingdom is an enormous kingdom in itself, and declares that before Atreus really loves his brother the sea will touch the pole, the Ægean turn into a cornfield, night give light to the world, water ally itself with fire, death with life, the winds with the waves. Yet a few assurances and a few fine sentiments from Atreus in the next scene remove his fears, and he accepts his share in the kingdom, after modestly declining it on the ground of his own unworthiness. The Chorus, which has been present at any rate during this scene, is equally credulous, and takes occasion to comment on the marvellous strength of natural affection, which has worked a change, to be compared, as it is compared at great length, to the change from a storm to a calm. The Fourth Act gives the one only opportunity which here, as in the 'Medea,' they have of entering into the dialogue. In a speech of more than 140 lines, only interrupted by a few interrogations and exclamations, a messenger relates how Atreus has killed his nephews and roasted their flesh. The place of the

butchery is elaborately described—a retired part of the palace, standing in a gloomy, haunted wood. We hear of the preparations for the deed, which have been constructed as if for a sumptuous sacrifice; we see Atreus unmoved by the prodigies with which nature is testifying her horror —the shaking of the building, the wine changed to blood, the weeping of the sacred ivory—yet doubting like a tiger where to make his first spring, while the victims, two young men and a boy, comport themselves heroically in prospect of their fate. 'O monstrous crime!' cries the Chorus, as they hear the details of the massacre. 'Are you horrified at this?' says the messenger; 'let the atrocity stop there, and it leaves him pure.' The Chorus, thus bidden to conjecture some worse barbarity, conjecture that he may have refused burial to the bodies, and given them to wild beasts. The messenger completes his tale by a recital of the horror that remains, describing the roasting and eating of the flesh with a loathsome minuteness. The Chorus, left alone to sing, concentrate their thoughts on the change of the sun's course, a subject which occupies them for nearly 100 lines; they describe the phenomenon and its accessories rhetorically, ransack mythology for every cause of it but the right one, and predict its effects on the mundane system, saying what will happen to each constellation. Atreus opens the Fifth Act with a triumphant soliloquy, which is broken off that we may listen to a song from Thyestes—a festal song, in which that unreasonable reveller at first tries to excite himself to conviviality by maxims about human fortune, but eventually passes into an account of his own involuntary perturbations and apprehensions. Atreus approaches, and places in his hands the cup in which the blood of the victims had been mixed in wine; but the portents increase, and Thyestes, more and more alarmed, asks for his children.

'You shall have them,' says Atreus, 'and they shall never part from you.' Every moment aggravates the father's distress, when at last he is told to open his arms and receive, not them but their heads. 'Do you recognise your children now?' 'I recognise my brother.'—'Natos ecquid agnoscis tuos?' 'Agnosco fratrem.' After resorting to mythological commonplaces to express his horror, Thyestes begs that he may have their bodies for burial, and once more receives an enigmatical answer: 'What is left of them you shall have; what is not left you have already.' When the truth is told him, he begs for a sword that he may rip open the stomach which has been so foully gorged, and in many sounding lines entreats the gods, not for his sake but for their own, to bring the world immediately to an end. Atreus, having used daggers, is ready to speak them. 'I know why you feel aggrieved; it is that you have been anticipated—not that you have partaken of this monstrous feast, but that you have not had the opportunity of giving it to me.' 'You will have your punishment from the gods,' returns Thyestes. 'And you yours from your children:'—

Thy.—Vindices aderunt dei:
His puniendum vota te tradunt mea.
Atr.—Te puniendum liberis trado tuis.

Octavia, the heroine of the third play which I have selected, is the daughter of Claudius and wife of Nero; and the subject of the drama is her repudiation in favour of Poppæa, and subsequent removal to banishment and death. From the nature of the case, we are not called to sit down to a supper of horrors like those in the 'Thyestes' or 'Medea;' but the spirit which animates all three is substantially the same. Octavia herself commences with an anapæstic soliloquy: it is morning, and she wakes to

wail again, in strains more piteous than those of Halcyone, Procne, or Philomele, for her own ill-starred marriage, and the deaths of her mother Messalina and her father Claudius, the emperor of the world and conqueror of Britain—a speech seemingly modelled on the lamentations of Electra at her first appearance in Sophocles. Her nurse enters and soliloquises also, in iambics, on the instability of fortune shown in the reverses of the family of Claudius, and on the sufferings of Octavia in particular. The two then join in what in a Greek play would be called a brief commatic scene, ending in a regular iambic dialogue. Octavia talks of her brother's ghost appearing in dreams, and invokes her father's; the nurse disparages her father for having preferred his wife's son to his own, and enumerates the tragedies which followed Claudius's marriage with Agrippina. The conversation then for a few lines is carried on with that smartness of retort which Seneca loved. The nurse consoles Octavia with the thought of her popularity:—

N.—Vis magna populi est. *O.*—Principis major tamen.
N.—Respiciet ipse conjugem. *O.*—Pellex vetat.
N.—Invisa cunctis nempe. *O.*—Sed cara est viro.
N.—Nondum uxor est. *O.*—Jam fiet, et genitrix simul.

The nurse bursts into an anapæstic consolation, comforting Octavia for her husband's unfaithfulness by the example of Juno, to whom she is compared, not very decorously, as being at once the sister and consort of Augustus. After a brief resumption of the dialogue, a Chorus of Romans enter and sing an ode in which they compassionate Octavia, whose incestuous marriage is dignified by the same comparison, recur to the old heroic times of Rome, when great wickedness met with great penalties, and are reminded by Tullia's parricide of the

recent matricide of Nero, the circumstances of which they describe. The Second Act introduces Seneca, who indulges in a soliloquy possibly such as he would himself have delivered, but certainly as remote from ordinary nature as any of the speeches which he has put into the mouth of any of his fictitious characters. He expresses distrust of his present prosperity; turns with sentimental regard to his exile in Corsica, which we know historically to have been distasteful to him; talks of the pleasure he then felt in contemplating the mighty frame of the universe; thinks it possible that Chaos may come again as an appropriate termination to the crimes of the human race, and is describing at length the progress of society through the well-known four ages, when he is interrupted by Nero. The emperor, as he enters, despatches a prefect to take off the heads of two nobles. Seneca remonstrates, and a war of words follows, conducted at first in brief repartees, through single lines and half-lines, afterwards by the more cumbrous machinery of declamation and counter-declamation. Seneca enlarges on Nero's distinguished position, and the opportunities of doing good which it affords. Nero replies that it would be madness not to guard his position; that from neglect of salutary precautions Cæsar fell a victim to Brutus; that Augustus shed blood copiously in proscriptions, and crushed his rival Antony without mercy, thus paving his own way to deification, and that an example which had so glorious a result ought to be followed. Seneca praises Octavia: Nero replies that she hates him, and that he has found the idol of his heart in Poppæa, who is superior to Venus, Juno, or Minerva. Some discussion follows about Love, whom Nero asserts to be the greatest of the gods, while Seneca declares his deity to be a vulgar error, and reduces him to a mere passion of the mind. After a second combat

of repartees, Nero breaks off the conversation impatiently, hoping that he may be allowed to do what Seneca disapproves, and fixing the next day for his new bridal. The Third Act succeeds, without any intervening Chorus. The spectre of Agrippina appears from the shades, to act, so she tells us, as torchbearer at this unhallowed wedding. She complains of her sufferings, something in the tone of Clytemnestra's ghost in the 'Eumenides,' and predicts that vengeance worse than the various forms of infernal punishment will overtake her son, whom she wishes she had killed while he was yet an infant. We then have a brief anapæstic scene between Octavia and the Chorus. She begs her friends not to incur the emperor's anger by grieving for her, and leaves the palace, hoping, rather than expecting, that her life may be spared. They ask where the old spirit of Rome has fled, and wish that violent hands may be laid on the new empress. In the Fourth Act, without any apparent reason, we have Poppæa herself brought on the stage, merely to discuss with her nurse (for she, too, has a nurse of her own to act as her confidant) an alarming dream which appeared to her on the bridal night. Her bridal train, she thought, had changed to a train of mourners, headed by the spectral Agrippina; as she followed them, the earth opened, and she fell into the chasm, at the bottom of which was her marriage bed; her former husband, Crispinus, advanced to embrace her, when Nero broke in upon them and buried his sword in her throat. The nurse, with a promptitude which supplies the want of ingenuity, immediately volunteers a favourable explanation of the various circumstances. As for Nero, and the bridal bed, of course it was natural that she should dream of them, having thought of them so much while awake. The train of mourners were mourning not for her but for

Octavia. The appearance of a personage like Agrippina was a compliment. The bed in the infernal regions showed that the marriage would rest on a permanent basis. The burying of the sword in her throat was a sign that Nero's sword would be kept in a sheath. Poppæa, without criticising this notable interpretation, resolves to propitiate the gods by sacrifice. The Chorus, whose sympathies for a time at least seem to have undergone a change, sing some anapæsts in honour of Poppæa, preferring her beauty to Europa's, Leda's, Danae's, or Helen's. A messenger rushes in, announcing that there is a popular rising in behalf of Octavia; but the Chorus, lately so warm in her cause, take the news very calmly, and sing more anapæsts about the hopelessness of resisting Love, who could subdue Achilles and Agamemnon, and overturn the kingdom of Priam. In the Fifth Act Nero enters, storming at the disaffection of the populace, which is only to be put down by sanguinary vengeance. The prefect announces that the rising has been suppressed by the death of the ring-leaders; the emperor answers that this is not enough—more blood must be shed, and Octavia's the first. As usual, the two speakers retort upon each other:—

N.—Parere dubitas. *P.*—Cur meam damnas fidem?
N.—Quod parcis hosti. *P.*—Femina hoc nomen capit?
N.—Si scelera cœpit. *P.*—Estne qui sontem arguat?
N.—Populi furor. *P.*—Quis regere dementes valet?
N.—Qui concitare potuit. *P.*—Haudquemquam reor.

The Chorus are now once more on the side of Octavia, whom they regard as an instance of the dangers of popular favour, and compare her fate with those of the Gracchi and Drusus. She enters, inquiring why she is to be dragged to death, and that a death in exile, and wishing for the nightingale's song to bewail her fate, and for its

wings to escape it. They console her by reflections on the immutability of destiny, and by the examples of other unfortunate ladies of the Augustan family—Julia, Messalina, and the elder and younger Agrippina. She embraces death; and they conclude the play by trusting that the ship in which she is to travel may waft her away, a second Iphigenia, from a bloody fate to an island of refuge:—

> Lenes auræ, Zephyrique leves,
> Tectam quondam nube ætheria
> Qui vexistis raptam sævæ
> Virginis aris Iphigeniam,
> Hanc quoque tristi procul a pœna
> Portate, precor, templa ad Triviæ!
> Urbe est nostra mitior Aulis,
> Et Taurorum barbara tellus:
> Hospitis illic cæde litatur
> Numen superum:
> Civis gaudet Roma cruore.

I fear I may have detained you too long by this account of works which, though not wanting in a certain kind of ability, are chiefly remarkable for the gross and glaring faults which they exhibit, insomuch that they might almost seem to have been written in express contravention of every rule laid down by Horace in his art of poetry as essential to the composition of tragedy. Yet it is historically curious to observe the rhetorical spirit, which, as Mr. Grote remarks, haunted the Athenian drama almost from the first, thus attaining its final triumph in the destruction of all dramatic propriety, all tragic pathos: it is historically curious also, though in a different way, to see the life and feeling of the Rome of Claudius and Nero clothing itself in the forms of Grecian legend, and to associate Locusta with Medea, as we have already learnt to associate Augustus with Æneas. And, perhaps, if we

look deeper, these tragedies may be found to have an interest for us which is not merely historical. No learned man of our own day is likely to maintain with the elder Scaliger that Seneca is equal to any of the Greeks in majesty, and in polish and elegance superior to Euripides: no popular dramatist is likely to produce imitations of Seneca on a modern stage, as was done by Corneille and even Racine. Still, if there be any tendency in any of the schools of poetry at the present time to sacrifice propriety to effect, the consistency of the whole to the brilliancy of the parts—to aim at producing rather lines to be quoted than works to be read—to dazzle the eyes with gaudy colouring, and fill the ears with the language of an ostentatious philosophy—to court applause by exaggerated sentiments, and seek the elements of grandeur in colossal wickedness and Titanic impiety, we may remember that characteristics like these are to be found in the tragedies of Seneca, and gather from the examination which we have been giving to the one hints for a right estimate of the other.

THE FABLES OF BABRIUS.[1]

THE name of Babrius is one which for the last hundred and eighty years has been gradually becoming more and more significant to students of antiquity. That he was a fabulist of one or other of the Greek classical periods, who wrote in choliambic verse, was already evident from a few fragments preserved by lexicographers and grammarians. But the first to make him more than a name was Bentley, in a dissertation on the supposed fables of Æsop, appended to the first draught of the immortal work on Phalaris. In reducing the father of fable to a mere shadow, he showed that some of the substance which had invested him really belonged to Babrius, whose half-corrupted choliambics might occasionally be traced through the prose versions of late paraphrasts. Tyrwhitt followed up the hint in a 'Dissertatio de Babrio,' published in 1776, detecting verses in a Bodleian MS. of the prose fables, and collecting all the remains of Babrius that were then extant. The publication, in 1809, of more prose fables belonging to an earlier version, from a Florentine MS., led to further choliambic discoveries, prosecuted in the first instance by Bishop Blomfield and Mr. Burges, though with different degrees of success, and afterwards by Sir George Lewis, whose *coup d'essai*, containing a collection of all the fables capable of entire restoration, appeared in 1832, in an elaborate paper in the Philological Museum. In 1835 a similar collection was published by a German scholar, Knoch, who appended the fragments, forming altogether a kind of variorum edition of all that had been written

[1] Reprinted from the *Edinburgh Review*, April 1861.

by or on Babrius up to that time. The year 1842 witnessed another discovery, much more important than any—that of an actual MS. of Babrius, containing a collection of fables supposed to have originally amounted to about 160, but now consisting of 123 fables and two short prefatory poems. The discoverer, M. Mynas, a Greek, was employed by the French Government; and accordingly the duty of giving the new-found treasure to the world devolved on M. Boissonade, the patriarch of French scholarship. Other editions soon followed; and the list of editors or critics of Babrius now includes the names of Dübner, Orelli, Baiter, Fix, Ahrens, Lachmann, Meineke, the Hermanns, Schneidewin, and Sir George Lewis. In 1857 it was announced that M. Mynas had made yet another discovery; and two years later Sir George Lewis introduced to the public a Second Part of Babrius, containing an independent collection of ninety-four fables and a prefatory poem. As we shall soon see, there are reasons for doubting whether this Second Part affords a very favourable field for the display of English scholarship; but, at any rate, it will be apparent that to English scholarship Babrius has already been greatly indebted. When he existed only in a fragmentary form, English scholars were his most felicitious restorers; and though when the MS. of the First Part was discovered, there was no Porsonian school in England to do the work of Lachmann and his friends, producing by joint labour an amended text in a short time, the accuracy, judgment, and fulness of information displayed in Sir George Lewis's edition, embodying as it does the chief results of continental cricitism, entitled it to rank as the standard one.

The discovery of the First Part of Babrius made a substantive addition to the treasures we already possess

in the remains of Greek poetical literature. Whatever the date of the fabulist—and dates of all kinds have been suggested, ranging from about 250 B.C. to as many years after the Christian era—he certainly wrote in a time when the echoes of classical poetry had not yet died out. In terseness, point, and eloquence he is, we think, equal to Phædrus, whom indeed he sometimes excels in treating the same subject. Let our readers compare the two following versions of an old favourite, 'The Fox and the Crow:'—

Qui se laudari gaudent verbis subdolis
Sera dant pœnas turpes pœnitentia.
Cum de fenestra corvus raptum caseum
Comesse vellet, celsa residens arbore,
Hunc vidit vulpes, dehinc sic occepit loqui:
O qui tuarum, corve, pennarum est nitor!
Quantum decoris corpore et vultu geris!
Si vocem haberes, nulla prior ales foret.
At ille stultus, dum vult vocem ostendere,
Emisit ore caseum, quem celeriter
Dolosa vulpes avidis rapuit dentibus.
Tum demum ingemuit corvi deceptus stupor.

(PHÆDRUS, book i. fab. 13.)

Κόραξ δεδηχὼς στόματι τυρὸν εἱστήκει·
τυροῦ δ' ἀλώπηξ ἰχανῶσα κερδῴη
μύθῳ τὸν ὄρνιν ἠπάτησε τοιούτῳ·
κόραξ, καλαί σοι πτέρυγες, ὀξέη γλήνη,
θηητὸς αὐχήν· στέρνον ἀετοῦ φαίνεις·
ὄνυξι πάντων θηρίων κατισχύεις·
ὁ τοῖος ὄρνις κωφὸς ἐσσὶ κοὐ κρώζεις!
κόραξ δ' ἐπαίνῳ καρδίην ἐχαυνώθη,
στόματος δὲ τυρὸν ἐκβαλὼν ἐκεκράγει.
τὸν ἡ σοφὴ λαβοῦσα κερτόμῳ γλώσσῃ,
Οὐκ ἦσθ' ἄφωνος, εἶπεν, ἀλλὰ φωνήεις.
ἔχεις, κόραξ, ἅπαντα· νοῦς δέ σοι λείπει.[1]

(BABRIUS, part i. fab. 77.)

[1] One of the prose versions points to another reading of the last line, which we should prefer as more humorous: *ἔχει, κόραξ, ἅπαντα· νοῦν μόνον*

There is much quiet humour in the following, which seem either to have suggested or to have been suggested by Horace's 'Lusisti satis, edisti satis, atque bibisti: Tempus abire tibi:'—

> Ζωμοῦ χύτρᾳ μῦς ἐμπεσὼν ἀπωμάστῳ,
> καὶ τῷ λίπει πνιγόμενος, ἐκπνέων τ' ἤδη,
> Βέβρωκα, φησί, καὶ πέπωκα, καὶ πάσης
> τροφῆς πέπλησμαι· καιρός ἐστί μοι θνήσκειν.
>
> (Fab. 60.)

We subjoin Mr. Davies's version, which, though somewhat deficient in freedom, is commendably close to the original:—

> A mouse into a lidless broth-pot fell:
> Choked with the grease, and bidding life farewell,
> He said, 'My fill of meat and drink have I,
> And all good things; 'tis time that I should die.'

The following, which is rather a poem than a fable, touches the mythological history of the swallow and the nightingale with an imaginative delicacy which may remind our readers of Shakspeare's lines:—

> King Pandion, he is dead:
> All thy friends are lapped in lead.

> Ἀγροῦ χελιδὼν μακρὸν ἐξεπωτήθη·
> εὗρεν δ' ἐρήμοις ἐγκαθημένην ὕλαις
> ἀηδόν' ὀξύφωνον· ἡ δ' ἀπεθρήνει
> τὸν Ἴτυν ἄωρον ἐκπεσόντα τῆς ὥρης.
> ἐκ τοῦ μέλους δ' ἔγνωσαν αἱ δύ' ἀλλήλας·
> καὶ δὴ προσέπτησάν τε καὶ προσωμίλουν.
> ἡ μὲν χελιδὼν εἶπε· Φιλτάτη, ζῴεις;
> πρῶτον βλέπω σε σήμερον μετὰ Θρᾴκην.

κτῆσαι. Such variations are not uncommon, the citations in Suidas occasionally differing so much from the text of the MS. of Babrius, as to indicate the existence of a different recension. For an instance in which Phædrus's treatment of his subject is more successful than Babrius's, compare Phædr. iii. 7, with Babr. part i. fab. 99.

ἀεί τις ἡμᾶς πικρὸς ἔσχισεν δαίμων·
καὶ παρθένοι γὰρ χωρὶς ἦμεν ἀλλήλων.
ἀλλ' ἔλθ' ἐς ἀγρὸν καὶ πρὸς οἶκον ἀνθρώπων·
σύσκηνος ἡμῖν καὶ φίλη κατοικήσεις,
ὅπου γεωργοῖς κοὐχὶ θηρίοις ᾄσεις·
ὕπαιθρον ὕλην λεῖπε, καὶ παρ' ἀνθρώποις
ὁμώροφόν μοι δῶμα καὶ στέγην οἴκει.
τί σε δροσίζει πηκτὸς ἔννυχος στίβη,
καὶ καῦμα θάλπει, πάντα δ' ἀγρότιν τήκει;
ἄγε δὴ σεαυτὴν, σοφὰ λαλοῦσα, μήνυσον.
τὴν δ' αὖτ' ἀηδὼν ὀξύφωνος ἠμείφθη·
Ἔα με πέτραις ἐμμένειν ἀοικήτοις,
καὶ μή μ' ὀρεινῆς ὀργάδος σὺ χωρίσῃς.
μετὰ τὰς Ἀθήνας ἄνδρα καὶ πόλιν φεύγω·
οἶκος δέ μοι πᾶς κἀπίμιξις ἀνθρώπων
λύπην παλαιῶν συμφορῶν ἀναξαίνει.
παραμυθία τίς ἐστι τῆς κακῆς μοίρης
λόγος σοφὸς καὶ μοῦσα καὶ φυγὴ πλήθους·
λύπη δ' ὅταν τις οἷς ποτ' εὐθενῶν ὤφθη
τούτοις ταπεινὸς αὖθις ὢν συνοικήσῃ.

(Fab. 12.)

Far from men's fields the swallow forth had flown,
When she espied among the woodlands lone
The nightingale, sweet songstress. Her lament
Was Itys to his doom untimely sent.
Each knew the other through the mournful strain,
Flew to embrace, and in sweet talk remain.
Then said the swallow, 'Dearest, liv'st thou still?
Ne'er have I seen thee since thy Thracian ill;
Some cruel fate hath ever come between;
Our virgin[1] lives till now apart have been.
Come to the fields; revisit homes of men;
Come dwell with me, a comrade dear, again,
Where thou shalt charm the swains, no savage brood:
Dwell near men's haunts, and quit the open wood:
One roof, one chamber, sure, can house the two:
Or dost prefer the nightly frozen dew

[1] Mr. Davies here apparently mistakes the sense, which seems to be 'Even when we were maidens, we lived apart from one another.'

And day-god's heat? a wild wood life and drear?
Come, clever songstress, to the light more near.'
To whom the sweet-voiced nightingale replied:
'Still on these lonesome ridges let me bide,
Nor seek to part me from the mountain glen:
I shun, since Athens, man and haunts of men:
To mix with them, their dwelling-place to view,
Stirs up old grief, and opens woes anew.'
Some consolation for an evil lot
Lies in wise words, in song, in crowds forgot.
But sore the pang when where you once were great
Again men see you, housed in mean estate.'

(DAVIES.)

We have heard that this First Part of Babrius has been used as a class-book in one of our public schools, and we really think the example might be worth following. The subject matter ensures that the thought will be simple, while the language is just sufficiently difficult and characteristic to give that exercise which constitutes to a schoolboy one great advantage of a classical training. Some few forms of expression will require to be unlearnt when the student comes to compose in Attic Greek: but the general character of the style is classical enough for all intents and purposes.

The Second Part purports to have been discovered under much the same circumstances as the First. Each professes to have been found in a monastery at Mount Athos—whether in the same monastery we do not hear—in each case the monks made a difficulty about parting with their treasure, which accordingly reached Europe only in the form of a transcript. The difficulty in the case of the First, however, appears to have been only on the score of expense; and this M. Mynas was able to overcome in a subsequent visit, when he became the purchaser of the original. Of the MS. of the Second

Part we hear only that the monks refused to part with it, and that M. Mynas brought away a facsimile, which, with the original MS. of the First Part, was sold by him to the authorities of the British Museum, in August 1857. We understand that it was offered in the first instance to the French Government, the purchasers of the copy of the First Part, but that they disbelieved the story of the second discovery, and refused to buy. Sir George Lewis, however, as Mr. Davies tells us, had no doubt that the copy was what it professed to be—made from a genuine archetype. Genuine or not, it is admitted on all hands that the Second Part is of far less value than the First. It professes to be not Babrius, but Babrius spoiled. The whole collection, from first to last, has passed through the hands of a 'diaskeuastes,' a scribbler who, apparently for his mere pleasure, has turned classical Greek into a barbarous jumble, and good choliambics into a kind of political verse, as it is technically called—lines having the requisite number of syllables, but written with scarcely any regard to quantity; so that nearly one half of the verses are shown by the metre alone to have been such as Babrius never could have produced. Such writers were not uncommon at various periods during the decline of Greek literature, though their function was more usually that of turning verse into prose, or *vice versâ*, or one kind of recognised metre into another. Still, even Babrius spoiled, if we could be sure that we really possessed him, would be of some literary value. He would scarcely give pleasure to the student who reads Greek poetry for the love of it, nor could we recommend him as a school-book; but he would still have his place somewhat above those prose versions which, no doubt, still conceal various Babrian fables—the great point of superiority consisting partly

in traces of the Babrian manner, which could hardly be obliterated, and partly in the certainty which we should then have, and which in the case of the prose versions is wanting, that each particular fable had a real Babrian original.

Our own opinion is, we confess, strongly adverse to the genuineness of these new fables. An attentive examination of them has led us to suspect that they are a forgery, and that of a very recent date. It is not easy to prove fabrication where the thing fabricated is, as we have said, not Babrius himself, but Babrius barbarised, and where the document to be appealed to is not an original MS. but a copy, for the absolute accuracy of which we have no definite guarantee. We believe, however, that the evidences of spuriousness we have discovered are neither few nor small. We can only state them briefly and generally, leaving those who care to pursue the subject to seek further details in an article, 'De Babrii Fabularum Parte Secunda,' in the Rheinisches Museum.[1]

First of all, we think it improbable that a new collection of ninety-four fables by Babrius should ever have existed. By far the greater part of the fragments and restored fables which were extant previous to 1842 are comprised in the former collection, and those which remain are no more than may well have been contained among the forty additional fables which that collection originally comprehended. Again, nearly half of the verses of which the new fables consist are obviously unmetrical, while a large portion of the remainder are not such as a poet like Babrius is likely to have produced; yet of the actual fragments of Babrius which

[1] The article alluded to was written by Professor Conington, and is reprinted in the appendix to vol. ii.

these fables embody few are altered at all, and not more than two lines out of twenty-four rendered unmetrical. Another most suspicious symptom is to be found in the extraordinary coincidences between the text of these new fables and Lachmann's conjectures on the fragments and restored fables as appended to his edition. This can only be estimated by those who will examine the matter in detail; and therefore we will only say that Lachmann's judgment is confirmed not only where he is probably right, but where he is almost certainly wrong, or, at any rate, where he has conjectured with scarcely any data to go on. It should be observed that we have here the twofold improbability that Lachmann should have restored the text of Babrius, and that the text of Babrius should not have been altered by the barbarising 'diaskeuastes.' Fourthly, while most of these fables closely coincide with one or other of the prose versions (a thing itself explicable on either hypothesis of genuineness or of spuriousness), the remainder, with a single exception, are copies more or less servile of fables occurring in such writers as Aristophanes, Plutarch, Lucian, and Appian, and included in the collections made by such scholars as Di Furia and Coraes; whereas the genuine Babrius, when telling the same fable as Lucian or Plutarch, takes care to tell it in his own way. Lastly, the general worthlessness of the fables is a strong reason for believing that they do not contain Babrius in any shape. Besides the veritable fragments of Babrius, they contain perhaps 100 lines which Babrius might have produced; not one of these, however, seems to us so decidedly stamped with his genius that it could not have been produced as well by any clever writer of iambics, such as are common enough in England, though possibly less so in modern Greece. The treatment of the fables is

almost without an exception just up to the level of the prose versions, and no more—another point of contrast with the genuine Babrius, who frequently throws into his fables poetical images, dramatic touches, and passages of dialogue which the prose fabulists discard as unsuited to their humbler purpose. On the whole, we cannot doubt that these new fables are the work of a forger who has turned the prose versions into choliambic lines, occasionally good, but generally very indifferent or worse than indifferent, and who, if he has not used the prose collections by Di Furia or Coraes, has certainly been a tolerably attentive student of Lachmann. At the same time, we do not profess to account for all the phenomena which the work presents. No one can do this who is not prepared to identify the forger and trace his antecedents. But we see no difficulty in supposing that his extraordinary command of unusual words—the chief point which we have heard alleged in favour of the genuineness of the fables—may have arisen from a study of ancient grammarians and glossarists, aided by a native power of invention, while the better choliambics may easily have been furnished to him by some more skilful composer than himself. Forgery is an art, and a forger would naturally provide himself with appliances for practising his art with success. So a few obvious errors which exist in the text of the fables may either have been introduced accidentally in the process of transcription from a foul copy, or inserted deliberately to give an air of genuineness. A forger who should be unable to produce these and other plausible appearances would be a very poor forger indeed.

It would be too much to wish that Sir George Lewis may find leisure to enter into the controversy; but we need not say that all scholars would be interested in

hearing the mature conclusions of one whose judgment and learning have already done so much for Babrius.

Of Mr. Davies's version we have already spoken incidentally. It is close and faithful, but wants facility. Even where the individual lines are expressed with ease, the effect of the whole is frequently that of too great compression and slowness of movement. The rhymes are generally accurate, but there are a few instances like *beheld, held* (p. 142), and in one place (p. 208) *broth* is paired with *forth.* Babrius would be nothing without his style, and any want of grace or finish therefore is sure to be noticed in his translator.

CRITICAL NOTES.[1]

τοιαῦτά φασι τὸν ἀγαθὸν Κρέοντα σοὶ
κἀμοί, λέγω γὰρ κἀμέ, κηρύξαντ' ἔχειν.
Soph. 'Antig.' 31, 32.

THIS passage seems to me capable of yielding a satisfactory sense without the need of having recourse to the construction proposed by Dr. Kennedy, which is, to say the least, an unusual one.

Let it be supposed that Antigone had said *τοιαῦτά φασι τὸν ἀγαθὸν Κρέοντα σοὶ κηρύξαντ' ἔχειν.* Everyone would have seen then that the use of *σοι* was perfectly obvious, indicating that faint notion of the concern of the party addressed, in the statement made so common in similar cases; why should we not go a step further, and conceive that having used, inadvertently as it were, a pronoun which, though not necessarily implying more than this faint notion of her sister's concern with Creon's doings, might yet, as it stood, be taken to mark Ismene as the party chiefly interested. The speaker corrects the probable misapprehension by immediately adding an emphatic mention of herself, *ἐμοὶ*, not *μοι*, to which he further calls attention in the following parenthesis, *λέγω γὰρ κἀμέ*? I, at least, see nothing far-fetched in such an explanation; and if there should appear to be anything of the kind, I believe it will be found to arise from the mere fact of an analysis having been attempted at all; an experiment which, if tried on any of the simpler forms of

[1] Reprinted from the *Classical Museum*, No. xxii.

ordinary conversation, would produce a similar effect of apparent subtilty and refinement.

There is another passage in Sophocles, which might, I think, be advantageously discussed by the readers of the 'Classical Museum.' It is from the 'Œdipus Tyrannus,' 44, 45:—

> ὡς, τοῖσιν ἐμπείροισι καὶ τὰς ξυμφορὰς
> ζώσας ὁρῶ μάλιστα τῶν βουλευμάτων.

Most of the commentators, I believe, agree with Wunder in making the general sense to be *consilia hominum pendentium prosperum eventum habent*, τὰς ξυμφορὰς being taken with τῶν βουλευμάτων, as in Thuc. i. 140, τὰς ξυμφορὰς τῶν πραγμάτων, where the Schol. renders ξυμφορὰς by ἀποβάσεις. Not to mention that one would wish to see ξυμφορὰς placed nearer to βουλευμάτων, an objection doubtless capable of being obviated, but still not wholly without force in a doubtful passage, the sentiment which the words are made to convey appears to be a very flat one. The Chorus had been exhorting Œdipus to suggest some remedy if he should have chanced to derive any from gods or men; and surely it is not very forcible immediately to back this appeal by the remark, that experienced men are generally found to have the issues of their counsels more prosperous; the power of καὶ being, I suppose, that not only are their plans well formed, but their success signal. My own suggestion, which I make with considerable hesitation, is to separate ξυμφορὰς from βουλευμάτων, and understand the latter as formed by μάλιστα in the sense of μᾶλλον: 'Since I see that, with men of experience, even casual knowledge is (often) more effective than counsels of reason;' a position at any rate sufficiently to the purpose, and agreeing well with the doubtful language held just before εἴτε του θεῶν φήμην

ἀκούσας εἶτ' ἀπ' ἀνδρὸς οἶσθά που. Some may wish to take ξυμφορὰς with βουλευμάτων as the *carnal part* of counsel, but the other explanation seems less forced. It might also be proposed to understand the passage, 'since I see that, even with the experienced, our calamities are more vigorous than what counsel can do,' were it not that καὶ ought then rather to *have come before* τοῖσιν ἐμπείροισι.

And now, as this paper has already begun to assume a miscellaneous character, I wish to be allowed to correct two or three oversights—a specimen, I fear, of a much larger number in my recently published edition of the 'Agamemnon.' However few, assuming your readers may be acquainted with the work, I should be sorry to stand accountable for any of the errors contained in it, in the eyes even of a single individual, longer than I can possibly help.

On 10, 11, I have raised the question, whether the accusative absolute is not merely a figment of the grammarians. I ought at least to have marked off the cases where the accusative occurs after ὡς in an apparently absolute sense, though here writers seem agreed that the words depend on some implied verb. The passage from Plat. 'Gorg.' p. 495, c. quoted from Jelf (who treats it especially from the instances with ὡς, though he supposes ὡς ἔτεον to be put for ὡς ἕτερον οὖσαν), probably belongs to this class, and so does not require the explanation I have given.

In the note on v. 308, I inadvertently included ἵνα among the illative particles which are found before the optative with or without ἄν. evidently with only a small modification of the sense. I certainly did not mean to prejudge the question against the commentators, who contend that ἵνα, as a conjunction, is never found with ἄν.

I retract also the qualified assent given in the note on v. 601 to the doctrine that ἄν diminishes the contingency of the optative.

Another position adopted by Haupt on v. 902, about ἄν with the participle, appears to me now to be questionable in itself, and not required in this particular passage.

The account given of οὐ and μὴ in a note on v. 491 is not strictly accurate, asserting, as it does, too broadly, that οὐ never denies with reference to anything that has gone before. In such a passage as Eur. 'Bacch.' 271, 272, θρασὺς δὲ δυνατὰς καὶ λέγειν οἷός τ' ἀνὴρ κακὸς πολίτης γίγνεται νοῦν οὐκ ἔχων, the negative clause (as has been remarked to me by a friend) clearly does influence the sense of the whole, indicating the reason why a confident man becomes a bad citizen, *quippe qui mente careat.* This passage may help us to amend our plea, and suggest that the distinction between οὐ and μὴ in such cases is as follows:—οὐ denies absolutely, though not always independently, as the denial may be put forward as the ground of a proposition; μὴ gives a denial neither positive nor independent, but checking the sentence as a hypothetical condition; thus μὴ νοῦν ἔχων would mean 'if he has no sense,' merely stating a possibility assumed solely for the sake of supporting the truth of the previous declaration; οὐ, as this word has even more than ordinary force, it is a matter of fact denial, and something more; the confident not only has not sense, but, by virtue of his confidence, cannot have; μὴ, on the contrary, does not deny the matter of fact at all; a confident man may or may not have sense; indeed, it rather implies that in some cases he has sense, by particularising the case of his not having it as leading to a certain result. It will be safest then to say, as a general rule, that οὐ denies always absolutely,

sometimes relatively too; μὴ, never absolutely, but always relatively. Thus there is no danger of confounding the two, even when both are relative, as the invariable presence of the absolute in οὐ will sufficiently distinguish it, as in the line above quoted, where *since* is very different from *if*. In the passage from the 'Agamemnon,' my version gives what I still hold to be the right rendering —'So let the bow shoot darts at us no more;' but the note is in error in assigning the meaning of *since* to μηκέτι rather than to οὐκέτι, and asserting that the use of the latter would necessarily have reduced the line to a mere ornamental addition.

I will conclude with a new explanation (as I believe) of a once much disputed passage in Horace, 'Ars Poetica,' v. 128.

'Difficile est propriè communia dicere: tuque Rectius Iliacum carmen diducis in actus Quam si proferres ignota indictaque primus.' The commentators have here been greatly perplexed. Horace speaks apparently of the difficulty of treating hackneyed subjects, adding, that, accordingly, it is better to dramatise the 'Iliad' than to attempt something entirely new. The contradiction between the two precepts is at once perceived. Some seek to remedy it by construing *tuque* as if it were *sed tu*: others, a considerable body, beginning, I believe, with Lambin, and ending with Orelli,[1] give an entirely new sense to *communia*, not that of hackneyed things, but precisely that of not-hackneyed things, things as yet untouched, and hence public property. It seems to me that the dilemma will vanish if we regard *ignota indictaque*

[1] It is not meant that all who take this view of *communia* agree in their general notion of its intention, *e.g.* Orelli does not refer it to *subjects*, but to *abstract qualities*, the individualising of which, in a human character, is supposed to be intruded by *propriè dicere*.

neither as opposed to nor identical with *communia*, but as, in a sense, included under it, being, in fact, a method of treatment, not a subject. The whole gist of the passage will then be—It is hard to give freshness and individuality to hackneyed subjects, and you had much better make up your mind to the extreme of literal imitation than run the opposite risk of offending the reader by any startling novelty of handling; better decline the problem altogether than produce a bad solution. This is premised as what is to be done if the worst should come to the worst; then follow some cautions to be observed by those who, in spite of the difficulty, wish to maintain that 'Publica materia privati juris erit,' &c., where the language is clearly parallel to *propriè communia dicere*, a fact which Orelli is compelled to deny. It is possible that others may have given this interpretation, but I do not remember to have seen it anywhere.

'M. VALERII MARTIALIS EPIGRAMMATA SELECTA.'[1]

I HAVE no special title to offer any remarks on the subject of Martial; but as, in looking through my friend Mr. Paley's interesting school edition of selected Epigrams, I have observed a number of places in which I am unable to agree with the interpretation given by him or his colleague, I venture to submit the questions at issue between us to the readers of this journal.

For the sake of convenience, I follow the numeration of the ordinary editions.

Book i. 26 (27). 5.

Non haec Pelignis agitur vindemia praelis.

'This is not the common vintage squeezed in the presses of the Peligni.' Paley, and so the Delphin editor. Is there any other instance of this use of 'agitur?' If not, may it not be worth considering whether 'agitur' does not mean 'is in question,' 'Pelignis praelis' being a sort of ablative of origin, constructed with 'vindemia?'

i. 55. 14.

Vivat et urbanis albus in officiis.

'*Albus*, as white as his own toga, viz., from paleness and ill-health or over-fatigue. This seems to be the sense of *albus* also in Pers. i. 16.' I have always taken 'albus' in the passage of Persius as denoting no more than the spruce get-up of the holiday reciter, and I think it would spoil the passage to give it any other sense. So here Martial, speaking of the blessings of a country life, impre-

[1] Reprinted from the *Journal of Philology*, vol. iii. No. ii.

cates a comic curse on his enemies, that they may always live in full dress.

i. 70 (71). 15.

Nec propior quam Phoebus amet doctaeque sorores.

'*Propior*, more familiar as a friend, or one nearer and dearer to Phoebus, lit. for Phoebus to love.' The Delphin editor gives a choice between this interpretation and another, connecting 'propior' with 'Phoebus.' Failing a precise parallel to the former, I should prefer the latter, taking 'propior amet' as nearly = 'propius amet,' or, more strictly, 'amet ut propior amicus.'

i. 76 (77). 6.

Haec sapit, haec omnes fenerat una deos.

'*Fenerat deos*, lends money on security to the Gods, like the *feneratores* or usurers. The construction is remarkable.' So remarkable, that I cannot believe it possible. The instances which Mr. Paley goes on to cite of 'fenare' used absolutely do not help us in the least. So far as I see, 'fenerat deos' can only mean 'lends you the gods on interest.' Martial doubtlessly means to say, as Gronovius explains it, Minerva is the only god worth paying court to; get her, you get all the rest: and as money is in question, he expresses this by saying not that she gives you all the other gods, but that she lends you them all at so much per cent.

i. 78 (79). 2.

Inque suos voltus serperet atra lues.

'*Suos*, of which it had taken possession.' I cannot think this likely. The word must refer to Festus, who is the main subject of the sentence, though he has not yet been mentioned. There is a rival reading 'ipsos,' which,

from Schneidewin's 'Apparatus Criticus' appears to have considerable authority.

i. 81.

Sportula, Cane, tibi suprema nocte petita est:
Occidit, puto, te, Cane, quod una fuit.

'On one Canus, who was so eager to obtain the client's *sportula* that he sent to ask for it when *in extremis*, and died of vexation for thinking it might be his last.' Surely this is not the meaning of 'una.' Canus, as the Delphin editor rightly says, wanted more shares than one, and died of vexation when he only got one. I suppose the case mentioned by Juvenal, i. 123 foll., of a man asking for a second allowance for his absent wife, may throw some light on the matter.

iii. 23.

Omnia cum retro pueris opsonia tradas,
Cur non mensa tibi ponitur a pedibus?

'*A pedibus*, for the servants in attendance on their masters. This is severe irony: for if the host would not feed the masters, still less would he feed their slaves. . . . . As the language has no article, *a pedibus* stands for τοῖς πρὸς πόδας.' This is certainly not the natural interpretation of the words; and I do not see why it should be the true one. The entertainer is constantly handing back dishes to the slaves behind him, to be carried away. Martial asks, would it not be simpler for him to have the table put behind the guests instead of before them, as that appears to be the destination of the dishes? It is a poor joke enough: but such as it is, it seems an obvious one. There is however another view of the epigram suggested by a parallel which Salmasius (note in Delph. and Var. edition of Martial) quotes from the Anthology ('Anth. Pal.'

ii. 11). The point of that epigram appears to be that a certain Epicrates, invited by the Epigrammatist to supper, brought with him a number of actors and dancers, to whom he handed the dishes from his host's table, *πάντα διδοὺς ὀπίσω*: whereupon the Epigrammatist remarks, *εἰ δ' οὕτω τοῦτ' ἐστί, σὺ τοὺς δούλους κατάκλινον, Ἡμεῖς δ' αὐτοῦ σοὶ πρὸς πόδας ἐρχόμεθα*, meaning, I suppose, that the host and other guests would like to change places with Epicrates' followers, so as to get the lion's share of the meal. Lucilius, the author of the epigram, lived in the time of Nero, so that Martial's may be an imitation intended to be taken in the same sense; though certainly no one on reading it would suppose it to be addressed to any but the giver of the entertainment. So understood, the epigram would coincide partially with Mr. Paley's view, though his conception of the irony is different, and in any case there is nothing to necessitate his construction of 'a pedibus.'

iii. 46. 5.

In turbam incideris, cuneos umbone repellet.

'*Umbone*, keeping up the metaphor, but meaning really *cubito*. . . . As Juvenal, iii. 243, says, "ferit hic cubito," so the sharp thrust of the elbow is here compared to the boss on the shield. Similarly Stat. "Theb." ii. 671, "clypeum nec sustinet umbo," and perhaps Suet. "Cæsar." § 68.' Whether this sense of 'umbo' can be supported, I do not feel sure; but the reading in the passage of Statius is far too uncertain to make it admissible as a parallel. Mr. Paley seems to waver between two opinions, one regarding the sense of 'elbow' as a technical one, the other supposing it to exist *pro hac vice* as part of a military metaphor.

Ib. v. 6.

Invalidum est nobis ingenuumque latus.

'*Ingenuumque*: this is wittily added as if in disparagement, whereas it was the very thing that Candidus valued. Cf. 544. 6.' On 544. 6 (x. 47. 6) we find '*Vires ingenuae*, constitutional strength, *ἰσχὺς ἐγγενής, σύμφυτος*'. It is not easy to make out from a comparison of these two notes what is Mr. Paley's meaning here. The present line, as my friend Mr. Pinder has pointed out to me, is closely copied from Ovid, 'Tristia,' i. 5. 72, 'Invalidae vires ingenuaeque mihi:' and these various passages, taken together with Martial vi. 11. 6, 'Non minus ingenua est et mihi, Marce, gula,' show that 'ingenuus' has a special sense of 'delicate' as opposed to rude or robust.

Ib. vv. 11, 12.

Ergo nihil nobis, inquis, praestabis amicus?
Quidquid libertus, Candide, non poterit.

Quidquid, &c. I will give you (*i.e.*, if you are deserving of it) what a libertus cannot, mutual friendship, and the immortality of verse, he perhaps means to add.' 'The immortality of verse,' which I see is a notion also of the Delphin editor, appears to me to spoil the humour of the epigram. Martial complains that his friend exacts of him physical exertions which have nothing to do with friendship: and so he jocosely defines the duties of a friend as exclusive of those which might be performed by a friend's freedman.

iii. 61.

Esse nihil dicis quidquid petis, improbe Cinna:
Si nil, Cinna, petis, nil tibi, Cinna, nego.

'A rebuke to one who was always asking some favour as a mere trifle. You say it is nothing at all. Very well,

then, I will give you just what you ask.' Surely this misses the point of the last line. Martial says, 'If what you ask is nothing, in refusing it I refuse you nothing.'

iii. 63. 13.

Quid narras? hoc est, hoc est homo, Cotile, bellus?

'*Hoc*, &c. "Is this, and this also, a *bellus homo?*" So τόσα καὶ τόσα is used of varied numbers or qualities.' In τόσα καὶ τόσα, the καὶ is surely an important element. We do not say 'such, such,' but 'such and such.' Is it not safer to regard the repeated 'hoc est' as simply denoting impatience?

iv. 44. 7, 8.

Cuncta iacent flammis et tristi mersa favilla:
Nec superi vellent hoc licuisse sibi.

'*Nec*, &c. Not even the gods would wish that they had the power to do this, viz., which some infernal agency has done.' This is plausible enough; but I am not sure that there is not greater probability in the Delphin explanation; 'hyperbolikῶς innuit poeta deos ipsos huius incendii poenituisse.'

v. 16. 1, 2.

Seria cum possim, quod delectantia malo
Scribere, tu causa es, lector amice, mihi.

'*Delectantia*, viz., meipsum. In the preceding epigram he had said, "Non prosint sane, nec tamen ista iuvant."' Both expression and context seem to show that 'delectantia' means 'giving pleasure to others.' Comp. the well-known line of Horace ('A. P.' 333), 'Aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae.'

v. 18. 8.

Avidum vorato decipi scarum musco.

'*Scarum*, some unknown but highly-prized fish (Hor.

S. ii. 2. 22), which was caught by an inferior one used as a bait.' Are these last words intended as part of the explanation of the line? If so, is 'muscus' understood to be a fish? or is the implication that the 'scarus' swallows moss or sea-weed, supposing it to be a fish? I find no authority in the dictionary for calling 'muscus' a fish: and Brodaeus, whose conjecture 'musco' is, defends it by a reference to Athenaeus, where φύκια are spoken of as a bait. The MSS. reading is 'vorata...musca;' but 'musca' does not seem to mean a fish either.

v. 25. 11.

O frustra locuples, o dissimulator amici.

'*Amici*, perhaps *amice*. . . . The genitive seems to mean who disguise the character of a friend, *i.e.*, its true character. *Simulator*, one who feigns it, would suit the sense better: or perhaps, you who cheat your friend.' It appears to me better than all these to understand the words 'you who ignore your friend,' 'who pretend that he is not your friend.'

v. 36.

Laudatus nostro quidam, Faustine, libello
Dissimulat, quasi nil debeat: imposuit.

'On one whom the poet professes to have praised in his verses on purpose to get a legacy: but the man, he says, has deceived him, and pretends he was under no obligation.' What is there about a legacy here? Surely a present would be enough for the requirements of the epigram.

v. 38. 7, 8.

Unus cum sitis, duo, Calliodore, sedetis:
Surge: σολοικισμόν, Calliodore, facis.

Σολοικισμόν, a solecism in language, viz. "unus sumus."'

It can hardly be said that Calliodorus is responsible for 'unus sumus.' 'Unus sitis' is Martial's way of saying that the two brothers together only make up one 'eques.' I suppose he must mean that Calliodorus by his conduct practically says 'unus sedemus,' which would be grammatically objectionable, a thing by the way which 'unus sumus' or 'sitis' is not. I may add that the editor's conjecture in v. 3, 'Quadringenta seca qui dicit, σῦκα μερίζει' ('seca' after Rutgers), seems a happy one.

v. 39. 'A satire on fortune-hunters, such as Martial figures himself to be.' Surely the satire is intended to fall rather on the man who is always inspiring hopes in fortune-hunters by making fresh wills.

v. 62. 4.

Nam mea jam digitum sustulit hospitibus.

'*Digitum sustulit*: has been sold to my guests: *i.e.*, my guests have used it up just as if they had bought it at an auction. "Tollere digitum" means to make a bid.' This is one of two interpretations mentioned by the earlier commentators: but neither its original proposers nor Mr. Paley explain how the thing sold at an auction comes to be spoken of as a person who bids at an auction. I do not know whether there is sufficient authority for the other interpretation, which explains 'digitum tollere' of a gladiator confessing himself beaten, on the strength of a passage in Sidonius Apollinaris, Ep. v. 7, supported to some degree by the Scholiast on Persius v. 119: but it has at any rate the advantage of giving a consistent image.

v. 79. 6.

Frigus enim magnum synthesis una facit.

'*Frigus*, a chill to my genial feelings...The sense is, my *one* synthesis keeps me cool, and that in a double sense:

I have no fuss in changing, and no one cares about me.' This appears to me quite to miss the point of the epigram. Zoilus changes his dress eleven times in a single meal, nominally because it is so hot, really to show how many dresses he has. Martial answers the question why he, who is Zoilus's guest, does not feel the heat equally: because he has only one dress, and so has no object in changing.

vi. 1. 3.

Quem si terseris aure diligenti.

'*Terseris aure*: this is shortly put for "Quem si diligenter audieris dum legitur, et terseris (spongia, *i.e.* calamo)."' This is very involved. The allusion may be to a sponge: but the sponge is a metaphorical one, viz., the ear itself. The words read pass through the ear, and Martial supposes that they are refined as it were by the physical process of so passing. Lucretius, vi. 119, has 'aridus unde aures terget sonus' (comp. Persius, i. 107, where 'radere auriculas' is similarly used): Martial speaks of the reciprocal action of the ear on that which rubs against it.

vii. 27. 9, 10.

Ad dominum redeas: noster te non capit ignis,
Conturbator aper: vilius esurio.

'*Vilius*, &c., it costs me less to starve at home, *i.e.* to fare poorly and cheaply, than to accept a present involving so much cost. Cf. 269 (v. 78). 2.' In spite of the parallel, the words seem more naturally to mean 'my hunger will be satisfied at a cheaper rate,' I wish to eat at a cheaper rate. Comp. Ovid, ex Ponto, i. 10. 10, 'Nil ibi quod nobis esuriatur erit,' there will be nothing to tempt my appetite.

vii. 44. 5.

Aequora per Scyllae magnus comes exulis isti.

'*Isti*, amico tuo.' This is a natural but unquestionable oversight. 'Isti' is for 'ivisti.' 'Percepsti' occurs a page or two later (vii. 56. 1), and Catullus has 'tristi.'

vii. 63. 5, 6.

Sacra cothurnati non attigit ante Maronis
Implevit magni quam Ciceronis opus.

'*Sacra*, &c. Silius did not take to writing poetry before he had read through Cicero, viz. to learn eloquence.' The meaning surely is that he did not imitate Virgil as a poet before he had performed the part of Cicero as a pleader. Silius's forensic triumphs are referred to in the following lines;—

viii. 37,

Quod Caietano reddis, Polycharme, tabellas,
Milia te centum num tribuisse putas?
Debuit haec, inquis. Tibi habe, Polycharme, tabellas,
Et Caietano milia crede duo.

'Polycharmus wished to gain a great reputation for liberality by returning Caietanus his bond for 1,000 sesterces, when he found he could not pay the money. Martial says, that is nothing: if you want to be liberal really, keep your old bond, and lend him, which is as much as giving him, another 1,000. Cf. Ep. 65 and 506.' The general sense seems rightly explained, but the point of 'milia duo' appears to be missed. Polycharmus had lent 100,000, and now makes a merit of cancelling the bond. Martial says it will be a far greater kindness to lend Caietanus 2,000 more, a fiftieth part of the sum which you profess to give him. It is curious that in the notes to Ep. 506 (9. 102), to which we are referred

as a parallel, the sense of 'reddere tabellas,' if not mistaken, is so obscurely expressed that it could hardly have been discovered from the words used, while in the present note it is explained clearly enough. This is probably one of the inconveniences of divided authorship, traces of which occasionally appear in the volume. The latter epigram, by the way, throws light on that now before us, as there Martial says that, instead of having a bond for 400 cancelled, he should like 100 as a loan.

viii. 70. 7, 8.

Sed tamen hunc nostri scit temporis esse Tibullum
Carmina qui docti nota Neronis habet.

'*Neronis*: compared with Nero's verses, which are keenly ridiculed by Persius, Sat. i., Nerva was the Tibullus of our times.' A different, and doubtless the true interpretation, is given in a note to a later epigram, ix. 26. 9, 10, 'Even young Nero, when he wrote verses, is said to have hesitated to recite them to one whom he called *his Tibullus*, Ep. 437 (8. 70). 7.' No disparagement of Nero seems to be intended in either epigram. That Persius ridicules Nero's verses in his first Satire is not a certain fact, but a conjecture founded on a statement in the Scholiast, which is balanced by a later statement that some in the Scholiast's day said the lines were Persius's own.

xi. 3 (4). 13.

Expectes et sustineas, Auguste, necesse est:
Nam tibi quod solvat non habet arca Iovis.

'*Expectes*: You, Augustus, must wait for a time and forbear: for after paying Domitian, Jupiter will have nothing left for you.' Surely Domitian himself is the Augustus spoken of.

ix. 31 (32).

Cum comes Arctois, &c.

I do not pretend to understand this epigram: but I would suggest that the goose had been a live one, that Velius had fixed on it as a victim before the war began, and had made it swallow a silver coin for each month, the eighth having already been swallowed before the news came that the war was over, and that the bird was then killed and perhaps stuffed, the coins being taken out and fastened to its beak. Vv. 5, 6 could hardly be understood except of a living bird: and 'extis condita' can surely have but one meaning: while 'argento' would naturally refer to the silver coin, in which the real value of the offering might be considered to consist. By the way, has Mr. Paley given the exact point of Vibius Crispus's famous answer to the question whether anyone was with Domitian, 'ne musca quidem,' '*i.e.*, to be transfixed with a pin?' I had always supposed it to be 'He is quite alone: not even a fly with him, for he has killed them all.'

ix. 51 (52). 7, 8.

Et si iam nitidis alternus venit ab astris,
Pro Polluce mones Castora ne redeat.

'*Et si iam*, &c., and if now, by a compact like that between Castor and Pollux, he has come from the stars to take his turn with you on earth that you may take his in the sky, you act like a Pollux advising Castor not to return. You beg him to stay wholly on earth, declaring your readiness to resign life here for ever in his behalf.' I do not think this can be right. It assumes that Lucanus's brother has come down to the shades, whereas the point of the epigram lies in his being still alive: it talks of him as coming from the stars, whereas he would be coming from the earth: and it gives an

unnatural sense to 'redeat.' The early commentators seem substantially right in their explanation. Lucanus is in the shades: Pollux has just arrived there to take the turn of Castor: Lucanus presents to Castor a higher ideal of brotherly devotion, and urges him not to go back to the sky in his brother's place, but remain where he is, as he himself is ready to do on *his* brother's account. Or 'alternus' may be Castor, who has just arrived, Pollux having gone at once: Lucanus seizes an early opportunity of impressing on him that when the next opportunity of change comes, he ought not to take advantage of it. In any case 'pro Polluce' goes with 'redeat.' A similar contrast between the affection of these two brothers and that of Castor and Pollux had already been drawn, Book i. Ep. 36.

ix. 52 (53). 1—3.

Si credis mihi, Quinte, quod mereris,
Natales, Ovidi, tuas Apriles
Ut nostras amo Martias Kalendas.

'*Quod mereris:* this clause follows *amo tuas Apriles Kalendas.*' Is there any difficulty in taking the words, as the natural order suggests, after 'Si credis mihi,' 'if you believe an assertion which your desert warrants?'

ix. 64 (65). 8.

Illi securus vota minora facit.

'*Illi:* to the original Hercules he offers prayers of less importance, when indifferent as to the result; or perhaps, without feeling anxious lest it should be refused.' The Delphin explanation seems better: 'quia Hercules non aegre feret a se minori deo peti minora quam a Domitiano deo maiori.'

ix. 74 (75).

'On a *cerea imago*, or bust of a young man, which

the father had represented as an infant, lest the real likeness should awaken too keen regrets. Ep. 487 (ix. 76 or 77) is on the same subject.' This appears to be the ordinary interpretation: but I see nothing in either epigram to necessitate the supposition which it involves. The most natural meaning would seem to be that a picture (why are we to suppose it to be a 'cerea imago?') had been painted of the youth while he was an infant, but that after his death the father declined to have one drawn of him as he had appeared in later years. 'Pictura' in both epigrams I take not as a painting but as the art of painting. Comp. Book x. 33, where, as Mr. Paley rightly says, we hear of a picture taken of Antonius as a youth, which continued to be the only likeness of him, though he lived long after.

ix. 98 (99).

Vindemiarum non ubique proventus
Cessavit, Ovidi: pluvia profuit grandis:
Centum Coranus amphoras aquae fecit.

'Water is so much more valuable, in a season of drought, than wine, that Coranus, a shrewd old vintner, has made a hundred gallons of it.' Can this be the meaning? Martial is not speaking of a dry, but of a wet season, and his meaning seems to be that the rain has not been altogether bad for the wine trade, as it has enabled the vintners to adulterate their wine more freely. The joke is not unlike one which is sometimes made in dry seasons, that you can get no milk because the cows and the pumps are both dry. Book i. 56, which Mr. Paley compares, is, as he says, on the same subject, but the point is different, the season being described as so wet that the vintners could not sell unadulterated wine if they would: Book iii. 56 and 57, to which we are also referred, are not parallel at all.

x. 17. 6.

Appia, quid faces, si legit ista Macer?

'*Ista* seems incorrect: it should rather be *haec*, these epigrams of mine. *Ista* should refer to *via Appia*, and then it would mean the *libelli mensorum*, which is against the sense.' There can be no doubt, I think, that 'iste' is repeatedly used by Martial when there is no reference to any person supposed to be addressed. See Book i. 40 (41). 1; ib. 70 (71). 18 (where the explanation in Mr. Paley's note, that the book is speaking to the poet, cannot be true); iv. 49. 1, 10; vi. 76. 4. In all these places 'hic' might be substituted without altering the sense. In later Latin I believe it is used without scruple for 'hic;' and so we may suppose that the change in its meaning came in gradually. At the same time there are passages in Augustan writers where it is exceedingly difficult to give it its usual force: Horace, Epist. i. 6. 67, 'Si quid novisti rectius istis Candidus imperti; si non his utere mecum:' Virg. 'Aen.' xi. 537, 'Neque enim novus iste Dianae Venit amor:' where to render 'iste' 'this of which I am telling *you*' is simply to confess that the word is used improperly. There is a later note in this edition, on Book xi. 2. 8, where Mr. Paley says 'iste' is virtually equivalent to 'hic,' and appeals to the medieval usage, though he still tries to bring out the reference to a second person.

x. 57.

Argenti libram mittebas: facta selibra est,
Sed piperis. Tanti non emo, Sexte, piper.

'The patron's annual gift to his client has come down to half a pound (not of silver but) of pepper. That, says the poet παρὰ προσδοκίαν, is not enough to buy—pepper with.' Surely the point is that Martial pretends to

regard the half-pound of pepper as intended to be an equivalent to the pound of silver, and says, 'I would rather have the silver, for I am not accustomed to give so much for my pepper as that.'

x. 58. 3.

Et quod inhumanae Cancro fervente cicadae
Non novere nemus.

'*Inhumanae*, sulky, unlike others of their kind.' Is it not rather meant as a constant epithet of the cicadas, which make themselves troublesome by their noise wherever they are found? (And so I see the Variorum Commentary takes it.)

x. 65. 11.

Nobis fistula fortius loquetur.

'*Fistula*, a doubtful reading. The MS. have *filia*. . . . The sense may be, I cannot imitate such a squeaking voice: my reed pipe could do that better than I.' I do not know whose conjecture 'fistula' may be, as it is not mentioned either in Schneidewin's 'Apparatus Criticus' or in the Delphin and Variorum edition: but I should imagine the author of it must have meant 'my windpipe will utter louder sounds than that.'

x. 70. 5.

Non resalutantes video nocturnus amicos.

'The sense is, at night I have to see friends who do not come to return me the morning's call.' The reading is not certain, the MSS. having 'nunc,' and 'non' being a correction of Schneider's. If 'non' is right, the sense seems to be, 'I get up at night to salute friends who pay me no visit in return,' referring to the early hour at

which the morning 'salutatio' was made, like the well-known lines of Juvenal, Sat. v. 19 foll. (comp. Book x. 82. 2). This, then, will be Martial's account of the beginning of his day. The seventh line, 'Nunc ad luciferam signat mea gemma Dianam,' seems to refer to an engagement between the early 'salutatio' and the 'prima hora;' but whether it simply means 'I sign a document by moonlight,' or 'I go at morning twilight to sign at Diana's temple,' I do not venture to decide.

x. 73. 7, 8.

A te missa venit: possem nisi munus amare,
Marce, tuum, poteram nomen amare meum.

'If I could not regard the gift, I could have regarded the name of the donor, Marcus, which he holds in common with myself.' So apparently the commentators: but the sense scarcely seems inherent in the words. Can Antonius have had the name of Martial embroidered on the toga?

x. 77.

Nequius a Caro nihil unquam, Maxime, factum est,
Quam quod febre perit: fecit et illa nefas.
Saeva nocens febris saltem quartana fuisses!
Servari medico debuit illa suo.

'The worst thing Dr. Carus ever did was that dying of a fever. The fever too was greatly to blame: it should at least have been an acute and painful quartan attack, that the patient might have been reserved for his own doctoring.' 'De Caro Medico' is the heading in the ordinary editions. But what evidence is there that he was a doctor at all? The natural sense is that he ought not to have died so rapidly, but to have had a quartan

ague, that so he might have been killed by his doctor. The notion that the patient was himself a doctor seems to have depended on the reading 'illa' in v. 4, which would make no proper sense with 'servari.' To understand 'medico suo' 'his own doctoring' seems impossible. With this exception I agree with Mr. Paley against Mr. Mayor, who supposes the poet to have wished that Carus's fever, if not cured altogether, had been changed into a quartan. If it could be established that Carus was himself a curer of quartans, which is the view of the Delphin and Variorum commentators, we might restore 'illa,' which has the merit of answering to 'illa' v. 2, change 'servari' into 'sanari,' and take the epigram as an expression of genuine complimentary regret.

xi. 3. 7.

At quam victuras poteramus pangere chartas,
Quantaque Pieria praelia flare tuba,
Cum pia reddiderint Augustum numina terris,
Et Maecenatem si tibi, Roma darent!

'More properly he should have said "quanta pangeremus si darent," or "poteramus pangere si dedissent," in which latter case "reddidissent," an unmetrical form, would have been required.' 'Poteramus pangere' is like 'poteras requiescere,' Virg. E. i. 80, 'poteras scribere,' Hor. Sat. ii. 1, 16, denoting a contingency not really past, so that there is nothing incongruous in its being followed by 'darent.' 'Reddiderint' is perhaps less regular: if so, I suppose it is to be accounted for as an aoristic use of the perfect.

xi. 49. 4.

Silius et vatem non minus ipse tulit.

'The reading *tulit* is obscure. Lipsius proposed *colit.*

It seems to mean *sustulit*, raised, exalted.' I am surprised that Mr. Paley has not mentioned Barth's very plausible conjecture, 'aetatem' for 'et vatem.' 'Aetatem' or 'vetustatem ferre' is a phrase for having a permanent value, the metaphor being apparently derived from wines. Thus the sense would be, Silius has earned immortality no less than Virgil. 'Colit,' on the other hand, requires the reading 'minor,' which has little or no MS. authority. Whether 'optatae,' v. 3, can stand in the sense of 'desideratae,' I do not know; nor yet whether 'numina,' the reading of one early and three late MSS., is worth substituting for 'nomina,' v. 2.

xi. 65. 6.

Sexcentis hodie, cras mihi natus eris.

'The point is not very clear: either the absurdity of keeping *two* birthdays is meant, or the poet implies that he will keep it in his own peculiar way, *i. e.* with anything but good wishes, such as the others offer. Or thus; your second day's birth-day will do for your humble friends.' He seems rather to mean that he shall regard being asked alone as a compliment, which I see is Gruter's view.

xi. 79. 1, 2.

Ad primum decima lapidem quod venimus hora,
Arguimur lentae crimine pigritiae.

'He means, by a hyperbole, that he has been ten hours coming one mile.' Is there any occasion for so startling an assumption? May not the host simply have complained that though he only lived a mile out of town, Martial was an hour behind time?

xii. 92.

Saepe rogare soles qualis sim, Prisce, futurus,
Si fiam locuples, simque repente potens.
Quemquam posse putas mores narrare futuros?
Dic mihi, si fias tu leo, qualis eris?

'*Leo*: if you were to turn into a lion, you would devour the weaker. Possibly I might act like other *potentes* and *tyranni*, who do the same to their subjects.' Is not this treating a joke too seriously? Does Martial mean more than to ridicule the practice of asking what a person would do under such and such circumstances which are not his nor likely to be his?

A LIBERAL EDUCATION.[1]

THIS volume[2] is one of a class which has become rather a prominent feature in the literature of the day, the class of which the well-known 'Essays and Reviews' were perhaps the earliest, as they have certainly been the most conspicuous specimen. The type of the class may be described as a series of essays of moderate length, written with a polemical purpose by authors whose views of the general subject treated of are not indeed necessarily identical, but at any rate convergent. The 'Essays and Reviews' evoked various replies written on the same plan; the Ritualistic party has followed the example in the two volumes entitled 'The Church and the World.' Within the present year this mode of treatment has been extended to political questions; and we now see it applied to education. Like other literary varieties, it has its advantages and its disadvantages. Essays by various writers will, of course, want the unity, the compactness, the thoroughness which constitute the value of a systematic treatise; but they are more easily produced, they appeal to a wider if a more desultory circle of readers, they neutralise the evil of individual crotchetiness, they give play to special knowledge and special aptitude, and they create something of the effect in literature which in practical life is obtained by a party demonstration.

I hope in the following pages to sketch very briefly the contents of the volume, to examine some of the

[1] Reprinted from the *Contemporary Review*, January, 1868.

[2] *Essays on a Liberal Education.* London, Macmillan & Co., 1867.

particular opinions advanced, and to criticise its general object. My own views differ considerably from many of those expressed by the individual writers, nor have I more than a limited sympathy with the polemical purpose which the book is intended to subserve; but there is no reason why this should interfere with fair and candid criticism, with the respect which the character and position of the essayists demand, or the regard which most of them claim from me as personal friends or acquaintance.

The subjects treated of in the essays are sufficiently various. Mr. Parker takes the History of Classical Education; Mr. Henry Sidgwick, the Theory of Classical Education; Professor Seeley, Liberal Education in Universities; Mr. Edward Bowen, Teaching by means of Grammar; Mr. Farrar, Greek and Latin Verse Composition as a general branch of education; Mr. J. M. Wilson, the Teaching of Natural Science in Schools; Mr. Hales, the Teaching of English; Mr. Johnson, of Eton, the Education of the Reasoning Faculties; Lord Houghton, the present Social Results of Classical Education. Each writes with a more or less distinct purpose of bringing about some practical reform. Mr. Parker's essay, being historical, stands on a different ground from the rest; yet he wants English taught in schools, modern languages and natural science encouraged in the Universities, elementary mathematics made compulsory, the education of passmen improved, and the study of Hebrew introduced: Mr. Sidgwick wants Latin and Greek verse and Greek prose to be abandoned in schools, natural science, English, and French enforced, and the study of Greek deferred, and in many cases discontinued; Mr. Seeley wants to abate the idolatry of the Tripos at Cambridge; Mr. Bowen wants to have boys taught language without systematic grammar; Mr. Farrar wants to abolish

Greek and Latin verse as a general engine of training; Mr. Wilson wants to have a course of natural science taught compulsorily at school; Mr. Hales wants to have English taught at school before any other language is learnt; Mr. Johnson wants to have the subjects now taught at school so taught as to educate the reasoning faculty, and in particular wants to have the French language and literature studied systematically; Lord Houghton's wants are less definite and detailed, but he may be said generally to want a modern training as a supplement to, if not as a substitute for, an ancient. We begin to see already some of the advantages of this mode of publication. The number of reforms proposed would overweight a single essay, however extensive, and injure the writer's chance of securing a hearing; while, on the other hand, the repetition of the same demands by different thinkers, such as those for the abandonment of verses, the teaching of natural science, and the teaching of English, produces an effect which could hardly be produced, unless under exceptional circumstances, by the voice of a single pleader.

Perhaps it will be well that, before proceeding further, I should indicate my own position with regard to the whole question. My belief then is that what we want is not the substitution of one theory of liberal education for another, but an arrangement by which different theories shall be allowed to subsist side by side. The prejudice of which we require to be disabused is not faith in classics as an exclusive training, but faith in any training whatever as exclusive. It is the growth of free opinion which is undermining the supremacy of the present system; it is only by the suppression of free opinion that any other system claiming to be universal can be established. As I read the present volume, I find that

when the essayists advocate their favourite branches of study, I can go along with them heartily, even where my own knowledge is not sufficient to make my sympathy a very appreciative one. When they desire that their studies shall be made compulsory, still more when they attempt to discredit the studies advocated by others, they seem to me to be venturing beyond their tether, and I no longer listen to them with satisfaction. I believe that there are many minds which do not require the training into which it is proposed to force them: I know that there is at least one which has derived great and abiding profit from exercises which are described as injurious and futile.

This premised, I will make a few remarks on the several essays in detail.

Mr. Parker's, as I have already said, stands on a different ground from the rest. It is not really a polemical one, though a few pages of polemical matter appear at the end as the practical conclusion of a treatise which is really historical. Even here the reforms desired are registered statistically, rather than enforced argumentatively: they are not examined, but proposed as things which need examination so as to furnish a programme, more or less exact, of the discussion which is to follow. But the real value of the essay is as a digest of facts; and here I can only wish that it had been longer and fuller. Eighty pages out of less than four hundred are certainly as much as could fairly be allotted to one essayist out of nine; but eighty pages are scarcely sufficient for a history of the study of the classics and the classical languages from the days of the fathers to the present time. It is an unavoidable result of this brevity that things are treated conjointly which one would have been glad to see treated separately; that there is an

occasional oscillation of view between two aspects of the subject. The history of classical teaching may be said to have two parts, internal and external—the history of its own development, of the changes through which it has passed in the successive attempts to work it effectively, and the history of its foreign relations, of the extent to which it has encroached on or been encroached on by teaching of other kinds. Of these the latter perhaps bears more closely on the general object of the present volume, as it has undeniably grown in importance during the last century or two, and most markedly during the last forty years. It is not surprising then that Mr. Parker, in the latter part of his historical sketch, should dwell on it almost exclusively, feeling, as he doubtless does, that during the period in question the course of home administration has depended a good deal, though perhaps not as much as it might have done, on considerations of foreign policy. Still, it would have been interesting to hear what the history of classical education in English schools and Universities has actually been; whether Eton has always cultivated Latin verses with success; how Greek scholarship was introduced from Cambridge into Shrewsbury, and returned with interest by Shrewsbury to Cambridge; what classical teaching in the Universities was like in the pre-examination period; and a number of other particulars, without which we can hardly be said to know how we came to be what we are. But the question after all is not whether we are told as much as we should have asked, but whether the narrator has told us what could best be comprised in the limited space assigned to him; and on this point I have no desire to break a lance with Mr. Parker. Most readers, I believe, will find much that he tells them both new and interesting, and will be grateful to him for the

clear, pleasant, and unaffected style in which his facts are communicated.

There is more true discussion in Mr. Sidgwick's essay than in any of the others. He has decided views, but on the whole he cannot be said to write like an advocate; and he is always thoughtful and suggestive. The examination to which he subjects the different defences that have been set up for the present classical system is searching, and rarely unjust. No doubt the advantages of Latin and Greek, as at present studied, have frequently been represented in far too sweeping language. Yet, if the defenders of the classics would amend their plea, and contend not that theirs is the only training which will realise the objects they have in view, but that it will realise them sufficiently, I do not see why they should not still stand their ground. And I think Mr. Sidgwick is inclined to be too exacting in demanding a precise apportionment of means to ends. When he says, 'Teaching the art of rhetoric by means of translation only is like teaching a man to climb trees in order that he may be an elegant dancer,' his metaphor seems to me rather to run away with him. Mental training is not like bodily training: the muscles of the mind are eminently sympathetic, and care bestowed on one will often act immediately upon another. Besides, no one supposes that a boy who is taught to translate will have his rhetorical faculty insulated to that one point. He will read some English at any rate for himself, and the sharpening of his perceptions by translation will enable him to read it profitably; and his tutor would probably advise him, even for the sake of translation, to try to catch the peculiarities of different English styles. So again, when Mr. Sidgwick, correcting Dr. Moberly, says that 'each language requires its own art of rhetoric,' he

says what is true in itself, but for the purpose of the argument is only a refinement. Dr. Moberly probably means little more than Mr. Sidgwick has just admitted, that to master one style is a very great help to mastering another. It is not necessary to maintain that Latin is a unique skeleton key to language generally; all that requires to be shown is that one or two languages must be selected from the rest to act, as almost any literary language may act, as skeleton keys, and that there are special reasons for choosing Latin. Generally, I suppose, the argument for teaching the classical languages may be said to stand thus. It may be considered as granted—Mr. Sidgwick, at any rate, grants it—that both language and literature are important studies. To master either completely, it would no doubt be necessary to know many languages and literatures; but, practically, some choice must be made. There are several candidates awaiting the selection; and speaking roughly, any one of them will give the linguistic and literary training required. Thus the advantages belonging to the study of language and literature belong implicitly to the study of Latin and Greek, and it would probably be an interminable business to discuss the question of more or less. What then are the reasons for preferring the classical languages where so many are equal? Mainly these: they are past, and they have exercised an enormous influence on the present. It may seem a paradox to prefer a dead to a living language, or a dead to a living literature, *cæteris paribus*; but the cause is not far to seek. Living languages and books written in them can take care of themselves: if they are worth studying, they are sure to be studied sooner or later. They lie about us: if we leave our own country, we come at once into contact with them: we can attain them, if we please, with-

out schooling. But dead languages, if not learnt at school, will not be learnt at all, except by a mere handful of students: they are remote from us, and if the tradition of them is not kept up, the knowledge of them will be virtually extinguished. This is a ground for preference which every dead language has; but Greek and Latin have more. They are the only two languages possessing a literature which are inseparably entwined with ancient history, the only two which have profoundly influenced the life and genius of times far distant from their own. Hebrew is excluded by its particular circumstances: Sanskrit, the only other ancient language possessing a great literature, if it has influenced the history of later times, has, at all events, not influenced their historical consciousness. The student of Greek and Latin gains, in fact, one of the chief advantages which are gained from the study of history: I do not mean that he acquires a knowledge of events, though he does incidentally pick up some knowledge even of them, but that he realises the fact that there *is* a past of the world's history, that there have been states of society as cultivated as our own, but essentially different. 'I know not how it is,' says Mr. Matthew Arnold, 'but their commerce with the ancients appears to me to produce, on those who constantly practise it, a steadying and composing effect of their judgment, not of literary works only, but of men and events in general.' And, if we may pass for a moment from school, there can be no doubt that the professed scholar's work is essentially historical; in discovering the meaning of a word, or appreciating the genius of an author, he has to go through precisely the same processes that are practised by the historian who wishes to ascertain the reality or estimate the significance of an event. This is surely a great

combination of advantages, for which it would be difficult (I do not say impossible) to find a parallel in any other study. 'Yes,' replies Mr. Sidgwick, 'but though your training has many elements, each element is not (at any rate, taken alone) the best thing of its kind, or the thing we most want.' Here, as I have said before, he seems to me too exacting, too refining: besides, the words included in his parenthesis open a question which is too important to be passed over so summarily. These elements are not alone; they are combined in one and the same study; and surely that is another advantage. Boys, so far as my recollection serves me, are not creatures of very intellectual interests: if they can excel in one or two things, it is about as much as you can hope. It might be well to make them encyclopædic; it is more practicable, as it seems to me, so to educate them that one study shall do the work of many.

On some of Mr. Sidgwick's special points, the necessity of a knowledge of natural science, the uselessness of verse composition, I shall have a word to say when I come to other essayists, who press them more at length. But there is one of his reforms which requires special notice—the postponement of the study of Greek. He thinks that 'if Latin (along with French and English) was carefully taught up to the age of sixteen, speaking roughly, a grasp of Greek, sufficient for literary purposes, might be attained afterwards much more easily than is supposed.' Now I do not say that there may not be a large number of boys who had better not learn Greek at all; all I wish is to guard against the seductive promise of that word 'postponement.' A dead language which is not learnt till the age of sixteen will, I fear, as a general rule, not be learnt at all. There is something in the mastering of grammar and dictionary difficulties

which naturally belongs to the earliest stages of instruction, when learning is more or less compulsory. A boy who is conscious of making real progress in one or two languages (I speak from my own school experience) will be the very person to resent most the drudgery of having to carry on, *pari passu*, the low, childish taskwork of another tongue. And if this is true of any language, it is true of Greek in a very high degree. The mere strangeness of the character has something repellent in it, so that even one who can read Greek pretty fluently (I speak not merely of what I felt as a boy, but of what I feel to this day) will often prefer, in reading an unfamiliar author, to read him with the help of a Latin translation. Then, again, the fact, noticed by Mr. Sidgwick in another connexion, that Greek has influenced modern languages so little, renders it specially difficult, and by consequence specially repulsive. Who that has groaned under the unfamiliarity of the German prefixes *an* and *mit*, *über* and *unter*, *ver* and *zer*, the force of which it requires such an effort to calculate beforehand, can doubt what annoyance a clever boy of sixteen would feel in constantly having to turn to his lexicon to satisfy himself about the effect of ἀνά, κατά, μετά, and παρά in composition? Altogether, I believe that there are few studies which it would be so easy to lose as that of Greek, few which it would be so hard to regain. What England would be if the knowledge of Greek were to fall into comparative desuetude, those whose experience has familiarised them from boyhood with the effect of the two studies combined can scarcely undertake to prophesy. Perhaps those who know less of England and more of France and Italy will find the prediction easier.

In what I have said, as in what I shall say hereafter, I

am anxious not to derogate in any way from the advantages of other studies to those whose circumstances or natural bent may happen to point in a different direction. My case is simply that classics, as at present taught, have a *locus standi*; and that case, so limited, I do not think Mr. Sidgwick's arguments disprove.

Professor Seeley is less suggestive and less judicial than Mr. Sidgwick, but he is very interesting nevertheless. His complaint is that University education is becoming more and more mere training for examination: he wishes to see a more genial and natural love of learning for its own sake. This he thinks might exist if the examination were not made, as it is now, the central point of the system. A learned class, he contends, may also be a class of teachers. England, centuries ago, was known as the mother of ideas, and there is no reason why she should not be so again. Many University men would doubtless echo his aspirations, if only they could see any means of converting them into realities. His own suggestions are three, though he intimates that they do not exhaust the requirements of the case: the opening of College Fellowships in Cambridge to the whole University; the reorganisation of the teaching system so that tutors should lecture not to men of their own college alone, but to all comers, and, in consequence, should be able to concentrate themselves on some particular study; and the arrangement of the names in each class of every tripos, not by merit, but alphabetically. Unfortunately we in Oxford have two of Mr. Seeley's remedies, the first and the third, in full work as part of our institutions, and yet we are still, in the main, a University of examiners and examinees. The second is desired by many of us, and may not improbably be established before long in some form or other, if indeed it may not be said to be partially

existing already; but I fear that, even then, we shall be a long way from the goal to which Mr. Seeley looks forward. Many other things would have to be brought about before the Universities could become really learned bodies. The question of passmen is academically what the question of a proletariat is socially and politically: as long as it is left unsolved, it is an open wound. The college system, valuable if not invaluable for purposes of discipline, tends directly to discourage learning; the wealth of the colleges makes them important, so that their heads form a social aristocracy; and yet a head of a college is not necessarily a learned man. Yet it can hardly be said that the Universities in this respect do not faithfully represent the feeling of the country, nor does it seem likely that any legislative reform in Parliament, be it what it may, will give us an aristocracy of teachers.

On the subject of Mr. Bowen's essay, the desirability of teaching language to boys without grammar, I have no opinion to offer which would be of any value. It is a practical question to be solved by those who have had practical experience. In what he says about grammar itself, his assertions seem to me far too sweeping and unqualified. The laws of language are not fully contained in grammar rules, but grammar rules are useful nevertheless to give form and stability to knowledge which would otherwise be vague and fluctuating. It is next to impossible that a boy should read enough to make his feeling for language a sufficient guide. Nor is it, I venture to maintain, any impeachment of the utility of grammar (though Mr. Lowe, in his recent Edinburgh address, appears to agree with Mr. Bowen in thinking so), that it was not known at all by the oldest of the classical writers, and only imperfectly known by the later. I do

not see why a grammar-writer needs to be 'confounded by the circumstance that Euripides wrote excellent Greek without having heard of an optative mood,' when he reflects that there is an optative mood nevertheless, and that those for whom he writes are not, like Euripides, unconsciously speaking a living language, but consciously learning a dead one. Here I am happy to believe that I may claim the support of Mr. Sidgwick, who evidently thinks it unreasonable when a French writer attacks grammarians for introducing refinements which Bossuet never knew, 'as if Virgil ever thought of a tertiary predicate, or Thucydides of the peculiar use of ὅπως μή.' Mr. Bowen, however, is disposed to go further, and to question the value of those qualifications which make up what is called 'a beautiful scholar.' I will not follow him there: the passage is too long to quote, and it is so rhetorically and (Mr. Bowen must forgive me when I say) intemperately written, that it would be scarcely just to an essay which is in many respects an interesting one to bring it into prominence. I will only notice one matter of fact about which Mr. Bowen's language might lead an incautious reader to form a wrong impression. The writers of dictionaries and grammars, he says, are sure to attack a man of ability and conviction who, in expressing himself on subjects of public importance, shows ignorance of the classics. 'A man of classical education, we shall hear, would never have spoken of the "works" of Thucydides.' The allusion, of course, is to a speech made by Cobden some fifteen or sixteen years ago, in which he was reported to have said that, to an Englishman of the present day, there was more to be gained from a single number of the 'Times' than from the whole of the historical works of Thucydides. Probably too much was made of this lapse at the time when it was committed;

and no one, of course, would now dream of quoting it disparagingly against a great man. But the point was this: Mr. Cobden was not borrowing an illustration from the classics; he was depreciating them, as many thought, rashly and unjustly; and therefore it was fair argument, as it was certainly tempting, to point out that the very form of his depreciation showed that he could know but little of what he was depreciating. A living great man was made the object of criticism, but he had provoked it by criticising a dead one.

It is not easy to discover whether one who, like myself, believes in Greek and Latin verse as a training for some boys, but quite admits that there are others to whom it is unsuitable, has any ground of controversy with Mr. Farrar. He apologises to classical scholars, who may have the leisure and the inclination for such pursuits, for any strong language which he may use about their favourite relaxation, and distinctly asserts that he has in view the case not of the brilliant few, but of the mediocre multitude. Yet, on the other hand, it appears to me that much that he says is irreconcilable with this limitation, and can only be interpreted on the supposition that his hostility to the practice is internecine. He complains that 'there are learned and able men who still cling to a system of verse-teaching which bears to so many minds the stamp of demonstrable absurdity;' asks why it is 'that no one, either in or out of his senses, ever thinks of learning any other language by a similar process;' 'cannot admit that it teaches style even to a handful who become good scholars;' 'deliberately and determinately repeats that in this elegant trifling, success is often more deplorable than failure;' appeals to periods in history where successful cultivation of style produced frivolity and feebleness of intellect; and ends by saying that 'we require the know-

ledge of *things*, and not of *words*; of the truths which great men have to tell us, and not of the tricks or individualities of their style; of that which shall add to the treasures of human knowledge, not of that which shall flatter its fastidiousness by frivolous attempts at reproducing its past elegancies of speech; of that which is best for human souls, and which shall make them greater, wiser, better, not of that which is idly supposed to make them more tasteful and refined.' These sentences (and no one who has read the essay will say that they misrepresent its spirit) surely apply not to the indiscriminate teaching of Latin and Greek verses, but to the teaching of them at all. To attempt to qualify them by interpolating in each of them, 'except in the case of the brilliant few,' would be not to explain, but to destroy their meaning. In fact, Mr. Farrar seems to have made a promise which he has found himself unable to keep: he has undertaken to respect the liberty of a selected few; but when he comes to introduce his reasonings, he finds them so clamorous and so cogent, that he is compelled to abandon even these privileged persons to their tender mercies, and to proclaim a war of extermination.

I must then accept Mr. Farrar's challenge, which has indeed already been given by Mr. Sidgwick, and declare that, whether in or out of my senses, I should be prepared to recommend the practice of verse-writing as a means of acquiring other languages, if they should have to be taught under the circumstances under which Latin and Greek are now taught at schools. We take Latin and Greek (whether rightly or wrongly is not now the question) as typical languages, and apply to them a minuteness of study which we cannot afford to apply to others; and part of this minute study is the practice of verse-composition. And we choose verse-composition in particular,

because as a matter of fact we find that verse-composition is suited to the capacities of young boys. Mr. Johnson, in a later essay, has done me the honour to refer with approval to an opinion which I expressed to the Public School Commissioners, to the effect that whereas a verse is within the grasp of a boy's understanding, a prose sentence is to him an impenetrable mystery. This was grounded on my vivid recollection of my own school days, and also on the experience of some years at Oxford, during which pupils were constantly bringing me composition in verse and prose. I have often amused myself by paralleling individuals with nations, and noticing this comparatively late appreciation of the capabilities of prose as a fact in literature, as I had already observed it as a fact in my own development. Homer writes poetical narrative when history is still unknown in Greece; Hesiod versifies didactics when there are no prose treatises on agriculture. But further, I believe that a man (under favour of Mr. Mill as well as of the two essayists) will appreciate the artistic part of poetry better if he writes verses himself. Here, again, I am stating what seems to me to be a conclusion from my own experience in the matter of English. It may or may not be worth while to cultivate the habit, but I cannot admit that it fails of its object. As to the extreme cases which Mr. Farrar mentions, boys saturating themselves with Ovid in order to write elegiacs, no one is concerned to defend them. It is not desirable to be thoroughly imbued with Latin erotic poetry; but neither is it necessary. A literary police, I readily grant, is needed for scholars, as it is for other people. But to talk broadly about 'a finical fine-ladyism of the intellect . . . an exotic which flourishes most luxuriantly in the thin artificial soil of vain and second-rate minds . . . the enthronement of conventionality, the apotheosis of self-

satisfaction,' as the kind of taste which Greek and Latin verse-writing tends to foster, is to talk unwarrantably and extravagantly. Such denunciations aggravate the mischief against which they are directed; they drive opponents into a defying and polemical attitude, and prevent them from candidly admitting that there are dangers in their study against which they, as sensible men, would wish to be on their guard.

I have not grappled with Mr. Farrar's argument from authority. My desire has been to record my own individual conviction, and so I have brought no compurgators with me, past or present. Yet I cannot help hoping that I might find some if it were necessary, though of course it is true that there are great names on the other side. Meanwhile, I think the moderate advocates of verse-composition may find some reason for reassuring themselves in the very violence of the storm which seems now to be setting in against them. Doubtless their party has in its time used expressions of unwarranted contempt in speaking of studies of a different kind; and it is no more than retribution that they should 'hear themselves as many things as they have said of others.' But Nemesis is just, and a limit must exist somewhere. There cannot be much more to be said against their study, and then, perhaps, the tide will turn.

I now come to an essay which I have read in some respects with more interest than any other in the volume; I mean Mr. Wilson's. It may not be as thoughtful as one or two others, but it is decidedly the most inspiring. The gem of the whole paper is contained in a few pages, where he gives an account of his own method of teaching botany to a class of boys by what he truly calls a *maieutic* process, drawing out intelligence before communicating knowledge, and only imparting formulas where the pupil's

mind has come absolutely to yearn for some principle under which to combine its facts. Even those who are ignorant of natural science must feel, on reading these pages, that they are in the presence of a really eminent teacher, who could hardly fail to exercise a powerful influence on any mind of decent capacity with which he might be brought into contact. Perhaps I may be allowed to mention the effect which their perusal had on myself. It did not make me feel that natural science ought to be taught in schools less restrictedly than it is; that I was already prepared to concede. It did not make me feel that natural science ought to be made a part of every boy's education; that I fear I shall always be disposed to question. But it set me thinking whether the method employed so successfully in teaching natural science might not be applied to other things in which I happen to be more interested—whether Mr. Bowen's view of teaching language without grammar, to which I was not previously inclined, might not have some portion of truth in it.

What more I have to say must unhappily be confined to the point on which I differ from Mr. Wilson, the necessity of compelling all boys to undergo a course of scientific instruction. I believe to a considerable extent in what Mr. Wilson 'holds to be a pestilent heresy'—'a theory of education in which boys should learn nothing but what they show a taste for.' I should not myself put it quite so nakedly; and I should be ready to have my theory modified (which does not mean set aside) by the practical experience of schoolmasters. What I think then is, that boys who have a decided taste for any intellectual study recognised as forming a part of school education ought to be allowed to indulge it, to the total neglect of some studies, and the partial neglect of others. The Platonic

Socrates lays down (whether he is always consistent with himself on this, any more than on other subjects, I really do not know) that 'no trace of slavery ought to mix with the studies of the free-born man; for the continual performance of bodily labour does, it is true, exert no evil influence upon the body; but, in the case of the mind, no study, pursued under compulsion, remains rooted in the memory.'[1] Probably many instances might be quoted to disprove this last statement; but I am sure there is a great deal of truth in it. 'Male parta male dilabuntur:' what we take no interest in learning we are commonly glad to forget. The real thing, it seems to me, is to strengthen the love of knowledge where it exists, and lead it on continually to fresh acquirements, seeking corrections for one-sidedness where I believe they may generally be found, in ever widening and deepening views of the study itself. There will always be outlying subjects to which the student will have some affinity, and these he may easily be led to pick up: a boy with classical tastes, *e.g.*, will, as a general rule, with a little encouragement, take kindly to English literature. On the other hand, there will be studies to which a boy of this kind will be apt to feel a natural repugnance; witness what I may almost call the hereditary feud between classics and mathematics. I do not say that it may not be possible, by a long and elaborate course of training, to soften these antipathies; I do not say that it may not be in some cases desirable to do so; but, after all, some choice must be made, and there are many things of which the majority of cultivated men must, each in his own sphere, be content to remain in ignorance. I am ready to include Latin and Greek among these, as regards one type of men, destined to one course in life. I do not see why I may not include

[1] Plato, *Republic*, book vii. p. 536 (Davies and Vaughan's translation).

natural science as regards another. One class need not know the Greek name for the liver, or the Latin for the spleen; another class need not know where the liver or the spleen is, unless, unhappily, the information should be brought home to them in a practical shape. Some physical facts the literary man will require for the conduct of ordinary life, and he will get them; some facts about antiquity the scientific man will require in order to understand the condition of things about him, and he will also get them. For these purposes, as well as for purposes of social intercourse, the broad sheet of the 'Times' newspaper will supply sufficient common ground. For purposes of mental culture, apart from professional exigencies, each will find ample means of refreshment in his own and cognate studies.

But it is said that classical men need a scientific education. Mr. Parker tells us that men of science make the complaint which Erasmus made of the scholars of his day: 'Incredibile quam nihil intelligat litteratorum vulgus.' Mr. Faraday, to a paper of whose he refers, spoke strongly to the Public School Commissioners of the delusions entertained by cultivated persons on matters of which no one can be a judge without having had a scientific training. 'Up to this very day there come to me persons of good education, men and women quite fit for all that you expect from education; they come to me, and they talk to me about things that belong to natural science, about mesmerism, table-turning, flying through the air, about the laws of gravity; they come to me to ask me questions, and they insist against me, who think I know a little of those laws, that I am wrong and they are right, in a manner which shows how little the ordinary course of education has taught such minds.' No one will defend these injudicious querists, who go to con-

sult the oracle and then argue against the response given; though I suppose it might be asked whether their belief in their illusions is likely to have done them much harm, apart from leading them, as it apparently did, to violate good taste. But I will meet the complaint by a counter bit of experience. In 1853, not long after table-turning came into vogue, I was acquainted with a person who had no scientific knowledge, but occupied himself chiefly with the study of Greek plays. He heard of table-turning, and became rather interested in it. He tried it himself in a miniature form, which at that time was fashionable among beginners, the turning of a hat. The hat turned readily. He had endeavoured to observe his own movements while the process was going on, but found that the very act of thinking of his fingers' ends gave him a sensation as if his fingers' ends did not belong to him, so that he could not tell whether they were imparting any motion to the hat, much less whether the fingers' ends of his neighbours were imparting any. He resolved to suspend his judgment until some physical philosopher should speak. In two or three weeks one did speak, and that was Mr. Faraday himself, in a well-known letter to the 'Times.' My friend was satisfied, and troubled himself very little about table-turning afterwards. What led him to so sane a conclusion? It was simply that he was just then beginning to take a firm hold of his own subject, and, in consequence, to understand the authority which special knowledge imparts to its possessor.

But, granting that it is possible for non-scientific persons to avoid forming or propounding rash judgments on scientific subjects by attending to the simple rule of minding one's own business, is there nothing of importance to all educated men, to appreciate which a knowledge of science is absolutely necessary? My readers

will have anticipated that I am going to speak of a matter far graver than any I have touched on yet, the issue now pending between science and revelation. Mr. Parker presses this point in a few words; Mr. Wilson more at length. The latter thinks that no one can meet the question properly in whose mind religious and scientific ideas have not been allowed to grow up side by side. Now, it is important at starting to ascertain to whom or what the duty of coming to a conclusion on this is owing. Is it to religion or to science? Clearly to the former. I do not say that we have no duties to science: we all of us have duties to it; those who are led to it by natural bent or circumstances are bound to cultivate it; those who are not so led are bound to treat it with respect, and to refrain from rash and ignorant comments on it. But that belongs to the part of the argument with which we have been engaged for the last page or two, not to the part which we are now considering. The new claim advanced for science rests on another duty, our duty to religion. Science and religion are in apparent conflict, and therefore it concerns all religious men to entertain some opinion on a struggle which may affect religion. It is a question whether we are all bound to be scientific; there is no question, among those with whom I desire to class myself, that we are all bound to be religious. I am not advocating any sectarian view; I admit freely that all truth comes from God, and that religion may be injured, not merely by questioners who start difficulties, but by answerers who ignore them. I am only anxious to put the matter, as regards those who recognise religion, on its true basis. What we have to inquire, then, is, how may our duty to religion in this matter be satisfied? Is it due to religion that all those of us who are capable of acquainting themselves with scientific

truth should try to do so? Let us consider what the points at issue between science and religion are. Two of those most prominently canvassed are the truth of the Mosaic account of the creation, and the credibility of the Gospel miracles. Would the breach that exists with regard to matters like these be healed by a general diffusion of scientific knowledge? Some have thought that a profounder investigation of science would remove the apparent contradictions which now trouble so many minds. It may be so; but is this likely to result from a more general diffusion of scientific education? If it is necessary to dig deeper than the science of the present day, will not such digging be carried on by the few rather than by the many? On the other hand, might there not be a danger, if science were more diffused among educated men, that those who are zealous for religion would broach superficial theories of reconciliation or confutation, such as readily commend themselves to partial knowledge, while they could not have occurred to honest ignorance? Surely the present aspect of the controversy tends to show that men require, for their own peace, at any rate, not instruction in natural science, but views drawn from a philosophy of another kind; views which, while accepting the statements of science, if need be, at its own estimate, shall suggest other considerations unknown to science, and produce in the mind, not, perhaps, intellectual satisfaction, but at any rate a contented acquiescence in imperfect lights, as a condition at once warranted by fact and recommended by analogy. If, as I believe, our conclusion must be, as religious men alive to the controversies of our time, that while, on the one hand, there are many unsolved difficulties, on the other there are realities lying beyond the range of those difficulties, why are we bound to engrave the difficulties deeply on our minds, so that,

turn where we will, they may always confront us? Why is it necessary that every cultivated man should be able to appreciate from his own experience the full strength of the resistance which scientific habits of mind oppose to the reception of supernatural interference? No one pretends that the dispute is really to be decided on that issue; it is merely one of various elements in the question; and till all cultivated men are so educated as to appreciate all the elements of the question thoroughly, it is worse than vain, it is mischievous, to press on religious grounds the claims of any single element to special study. No doubt the study of evidences is the proper work of the ablest of the clergy, and of such of the laity who feel that from circumstances they are best able in that way to serve their generation; but it should be really thorough study, neither one-sided nor superficial. What others have to do is, not to solve the problem for the world, but to appreciate its conditions, which will be one way of solving it for themselves.

After all, I fear Mr. Wilson will still be unconvinced. He will not allow literary men to argue from their own mental experience that they do not need a scientific training; and that, I am afraid, is at bottom the argument which is really powerful with all of us. I will only entreat him to believe that, though a literary student may not use his faculty of natural observation when he is out of doors, his mind is not necessarily idle or unoccupied; he may have thoughts which are worth having in themselves, and which he could not have if his attention were otherwise engaged.

The three remaining essays need not detain us so long. The matters for controversy which they open have been partially anticipated; and generally they may be said to be less controversial than most of their predecessors. Two

of them, moreover, are comparatively short, those by Mr. Hales and Lord Houghton. Lord Houghton's acts as a sort of *l'envoy*, not going into detail, but enforcing the general doctrine of making education more modern on social grounds. Like everything which comes from him, it is elegantly and gracefully written, and, standing as it does at the end of the list, it enables us to close the volume with a sense of artistic finish. Mr. Hales, on the other hand, devotes himself to a special point, the teaching of English in schools, which he thinks ought to be made the basis of all other linguistic and literary training. Mr. Sidgwick had already pressed the same thing, though I am not sure whether he would entirely agree with Mr. Hales on all matters of detail. Their view would have my warm sympathy if I could be quite sure of its feasibility. No one will deny that a knowledge of the English language and literature is an essential part of the literary training of an Englishman. Other modern languages he may neglect with more or less of impunity; but to neglect his own would be absolutely suicidal. The only question is whether room can be found for it in the classical part of the present school curriculum. I am assuming that Greek and Latin are to be retained as portions of the early training of boys educated in that department; and I should be inclined to add to them German, for the reason which I hinted in a former page, that, while it is all-important as a key to modern learning, it is comparatively difficult to pick up later, and therefore ought, I think, to be mastered in those early years which are naturally associated with intellectual drudgery. With three languages on hand, I confess I doubt whether even a clever boy would find room for the systematic study of a fourth, even though that fourth be his own. On the other hand, knowledge of English can always be picked

up: a boy's ignorance of his own language is not that kind of ignorance which offers resistance to the acquirement of knowledge, and much may be done without direct teaching to make a clever boy a good English scholar. Let me say, by the way, that I scarcely agree with Mr. Sidgwick when he declares that he wishes the 'occasional and irregular training' which boys now get 'to be made as general and systematic as possible.' One of the complaints against the increasing exactingness of modern education is, that it allows boys no time for reading. Doubtless, now that athletic tastes have become so absorbing, masters may be jealous of leaving more leisure than necessary at a boy's disposal; yet I think most would feel it to be a pity that a pupil should receive the whole of his intellectual impressions through the medium of his form-master or his private tutor. That English should be taught to those whose training is not intended to be classical, I readily admit; and if in a bifurcated school any crumbs from the well-furnished table in the modern department could be made to fall to the classical boys without entailing the necessity of their sitting through every meal, it would be a real point gained. While I am on the subject, I may note that, the absence of any Professor of English is one of the most patent wants of the English Universities. An Anglo-Saxon chair may throw light on the 'divine fore-time' of the language; a Poetry chair may do something for parts of the literature; but a more systematic cultivation of the subject is needed, and it is a discredit that Oxford and Cambridge should make no attempt to supply it.

Mr. Johnson's essay comes near Mr. Sidgwick's for suggestiveness and thought, if it is not quite equal to it. Perhaps its effect is injured to some extent by the form into which a good deal of it is thrown. There is an auto-

biographical element in it; it professes to record the writer's experiences as a schoolmaster; and this is not unfrequently done in a tone of cynical self-depreciation. The result is that, though we have much light, the light is not always quite dry. The same vein of individuality appears occasionally in the illustrations with which he sets forth his arguments. Like most of his colleagues in this volume, he pleads for physical science; and one of the considerations he advances is the value which the classical writers whom we admire attached to the study. 'It is painful to enumerate all that we leave unnoticed; the "natural questions" which a Seneca would have asked, which we, the distant heirs of Seneca, either slight or dread. We force our pupils to say in Latin verse, that sounds to me almost as the voice of the Fairy Queen summoning the rhymer, "Happy is he who hath been able to learn the causes of things, why the earth trembles, and the deep seas gape;" and yet we are not to tell them. Virgil humbly grieved, but we grieve not, that we cannot reach these realms of wonder. . . . What would Lucretius have thought of men who knew, or might know, such things, and were afraid to tell the young of them, for fear of spoiling their perception of his peculiarities? How would Ovid flout at us if he heard that we could unfold the boundless mysteries contained in his germinal saying, "All things change, nothing perishes," and passed them by to potter over his little ingenuities!' Surely it is misleading to talk in this way of the ancients, as though their circumstances were precisely the same as our own. Knowledge was in their days far less extensive and multifarious than it is now, and the principle of a division of studies was in consequence much less recognised. An ancient student was necessarily more ambitious in his range of inquiry than a modern student either can or ought to be.

Then there are special circumstances attaching to each of the different writers named. It is difficult to understand why we are bound to follow in the steps of Seneca; he is not one of the authors who have made our knowledge of classical literature what it is to us; and the mere fact that he writes in Latin and was encyclopædic is hardly a reason why those who read Latin should be encyclopædic also. Virgil, if I read him rightly, did not so much wish to be a natural philosopher, which he might have been, as to be the poet of natural philosophy; nor is it clear, even so, what his wish means. It may be a graceful way of deprecating comparison with Lucretius, to whom the whole passage is an allusion: it may be a despairing aspiration after the inward satisfaction supposed to be given by Epicurean belief or disbelief. As for Lucretius, the 'nature of things' had a terrible reality to him; his creed was bound up with his physical theory. It would certainly be strange if anyone should read through his poem for the sake of noting his peculiarities without attempting to understand his philosophy; but is this often done? My own experience would lead me to think that hardly any who are not prepared to enter into his philosophy read him continuously, and that those who wish to observe his peculiarities as a writer read only certain parts of his poem, those, namely, which contain least of natural science. Ovid's case is diametrically opposite: whatever he may have thought of his 'germinal saying,' it is in no sense a sample of his poetry; and those who, instead of trying to develop its meaning, devote their time to his prettinesses of expression, do no more than he apparently wished them to do. Is a reader of Pope's 'Essay on Man' bound to study the philosophy, which is probably second-hand as well as second-rate, rather than the diction and versification, which are really what give the poem its character?

But I must not follow Mr. Johnson further into details, though I should have liked to put him on his defence for his statement that 'the monstrous fatuities which disfigure Æschylus are condemned by the clear head of an Aristophanes, and can be proved to be bad;' an unmeasured way of talking, from which even Mr. Sidgwick is not quite free. A dissection of an illustration takes up more room than the illustration itself; and the more an essayist has to say, the more a reviewer is obliged to say in answering him. I will only add, then, briefly, that I cordially agree with Mr. Johnson's object, the education of the reasoning faculties of boys, and think that he has been very successful in showing in how many ways it may be done without outstepping the ordinary limits of a classical and literary training. To his plan of teaching French systematically to his classical pupils I incline to demur, for the reason I gave a page or two back in speaking of Mr. Hales's essay. Three languages seem to me the utmost that a boy can profitably pursue at once; and French is not, like German, a language which it is difficult to acquire at a later period.

I should be sorry if it were supposed that I wished the foregoing pages to be accepted as an adequate examination of the contents of this volume. To examine it thoroughly would require a volume of at least twice its bulk, and a writer far more versed in educational questions than I am. All that I have attempted to do is to follow the example of the Parliamentary orator (was it Mr. Cobden?) who said it was his habit to step out and join the debate when he saw it coming by his door. The thread which runs through my criticism is, as I have said already, a belief that the question before us is not how to frame a new theory of liberal education which shall supersede the old, but how to construct a system which shall

give scope for different theories, adapted to different circumstances. We are not likely to convince each other; we have no right to silence or ignore each other; it remains that we should tolerate each other. How a toleration may best be organised is a question which I leave to those who are more accustomed to grapple with details. The adoption of bifurcation in all our larger schools would seem to be a natural way of meeting the want in its earlier stages: to satisfy it in a later period it would probably be necessary that the Universities should recognise from the first that distinction of studies which is now conceded, sparingly and with hesitation, in the latter part of an academical career.

THE ANNOTATED BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER ON THE COMMUNION SERVICE.[1]

THERE are few things, it seems to me, by which theologians can do better service than by commenting carefully and judiciously on our doctrinal formularies. While we have doctrinal standards, questions will constantly arise about the compatibility of particular opinions, held by individuals or sections of the Church, with the true meaning of those standards; and there can be no better way of ascertaining that meaning than by close and scrupulous commentaries, drawing out the sense of the original by the same rigorous method of interpretation which is daily being applied with success to the study of ancient literature. Such works, so executed, would be of the highest use with reference to the legal decision of questions like those which are now vexing the Church: not only would they be quoted by advocates, but they might materially assist lay judges; nay, it is scarcely too much to say that they might contribute greatly to remove the unsatisfactoriness which even persons least inclined to underrate the advantages of lay courts of appeal will admit to be inherent in the decision of theological issues by unprofessional authority. And, putting controversy out of sight, I may be allowed to say that no class of books would be more interesting to students like myself, who know by experience the value of accurate exposition, and desire to see the work which they are attempting to do for others in one department done for themselves in another.

[1] Reprinted from the *Contemporary Review*, March 1868.

Accordingly, it was with much pleasure that I noticed the appearance of the 'Annotated Prayer-Book.'[1] From the names associated with it, I presumed that I should find in it many points ruled otherwise than I should myself be likely to rule them; but I felt that this, if fairly and candidly done, need not interfere with my deriving much valuable instruction, and I reflected that interpreters of a different school might not have had that sustaining enthusiasm for the subject which is the best guarantee for work being performed well and thoroughly. I naturally turned to that part of the work which may be said to be the keystone of the whole, the Communion Office. I can scarcely say how much I have been disappointed. I have as little title as I have wish to dispute the learning there displayed; but it seems to me to be applied almost throughout, not to candid exposition, but to polemical pleading. I propose to establish this by an examination of this portion of the commentary in detail; and I am anxious to appeal to my friend, Mr. Medd, who is one of the authors of it, on behalf of those principles of just criticism which I cannot believe that he himself undervalues.

The fault of the commentary (here, as elsewhere, I am speaking exclusively of the commentary on the Communion Office) appears to me to be that it is written on a theory. Now, there is scarcely any subject on which, as I venture to think, the intrusion of theory requires to be so jealously watched as in that of interpretation. We come to our work as learners, expecting to find out from the words of the document what the meaning of the document is; and it is only when the words have quite failed

[1] *The Annotated Book of Common Prayer*, Part II. London: Rivingtons, 1866. I have not been able to collate the first edition (that which I have had before me) with the second; but so far as I have glanced at the latter, it seems (at least in the part with which I am concerned) substantially unaltered.—J.C.

to give us light that we can have any right to resort to hypothesis. Of course I do not mean to say that there will not be some cases where the use of hypothesis is justifiable and necessary; but they will be comparatively few, unless, which is not likely to occur, the general language of the document is confessedly perplexed and difficult. In such cases, no doubt, collateral considerations, involving more or less of theory, will come in. But to view the whole subject in the light of theory is simply to prejudge it; to profess to institute an examination, yet to take the most effectual means of rendering that examination nugatory.

The theory of the annotators, which appears, I think, plainly in the Introduction to the Communion Office, is the substantial identity of the Eucharistic doctrine contained in the English office with that of the various liturgies which it superseded. No one will dispute the right to hold such an opinion, if it is supported by facts. But it is evident that one chief class of facts on which it must rest is that furnished by the Communion Office itself, and that therefore those facts must not be explained by the theory. Yet that this is what is attempted will, I think, be plain as we go on to examine the commentary in detail. One conspicuous instance meets us in the Introduction itself (p. 154):—

> Although, however, the change in the position of the words of oblation has tended to obscure the meaning of the service, it cannot for a moment be supposed that the revisers of our Liturgy in 1552 were so exceedingly and profanely presumptuous as to wish to suppress the doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice. There were probably some unfortunate temporary reasons (such as the unscrupulous tyranny of ignorant and biassed rulers) which induced them to make such a change as would save the doctrine, while it left the statement of it more

open than before; and they probably thought it better to consult expediency to a certain extent than to run the risk of such an interference as would have taken the Prayer-Book out of the hands of the Church, and moulded it to the meagre faith of Calvinistic Puritans.

The writer then goes on to mention that some eminent divines, such as Andrewes and Overall, used to alter the order *proprio motu*, and to express, if I understand him rightly, his regret that this unauthorised mode of redressing what is conceived to be wrong has not been practised since the last revision. Now, without stopping to remark on the want of moderation shown in speaking of a course which, whether it was historically adopted or not, would have accorded with the belief of many of the writer's fellow-churchmen at the present day, as 'exceedingly and profanely presumptuous,' I think there can be no doubt that we have here an illegitimate use of hypothesis. We are told that a certain thing cannot have been intended, because the writer feels that it ought not to have been intended. This, it is obvious, can only be a legitimate consequence on the supposition that the framers of the Liturgy of 1552 would certainly have agreed with the writer in repudiating that interpretation of their action which he deprecates. Yet we know that Cranmer was one of the principal agents in framing that Liturgy, and it is admitted that at the time of framing it he had already, as Dr. Pusey has expressed it in his book on the Real Presence, 'gone over to the Swiss school.' I do not allege this fact as proving that the alteration made by the framers is to be interpreted in a certain way, but as showing that to interpret it in that particular way would not be in itself monstrous. It is still open to contend that Cranmer did not impress his own view on the Liturgy, but that can only be supported by an examination of the formu-

lary itself. The writer, it is true, goes on to give positive reasons why the alteration cannot have the effect imputed to it. These I shall have substantially to deal with afterwards; at present, I will only say that they would have lost nothing in the estimation of candid men if they had not been preceded by an attempt to put opponents summarily out of court.

I proceed to the commentary.

The first note, one of several on the title, runs thus:—

> The title of this office in the Prayer-Book of 1549 was 'The Supper of the Lord, and the Holy Communion, commonly called the Mass.' It is evident that the Reformers did not see any reason why this sacrament should not still be commonly called 'the mass,' but the name soon dropped out of use after the introduction of the vernacular into Divine service, and it was not printed as a third title in 1552, or in any subsequent Prayer-Books.

The 'evidence,' I suppose, depends on the assumption that the Reformers, having once used the word 'mass' after breaking with Rome, are not likely to have seen any objection to it subsequently. The more ordinary argument would be that as they dropped the word they saw some objection to it. Nor does it appear why the mere adoption of the vernacular in the service should have led to the disuse of the old name. The word 'mass' was, to all intents and purposes, a thoroughly vernacular word, and continued so. But it had become associated with the ante-Reformation service, from which, rightly or wrongly, the reformed one was supposed essentially to differ; and this will sufficiently account for its coming to be abandoned as a popular term in connection with the new Liturgy. It may at least be said that if the framers of 1552 had been more anxious than those of 1549 to separate themselves from the ante-Reformation use (whether

or not this be conceded as a fact), the abandonment of the word 'mass' would have been as important a step in that direction as any that was likely to occur to them.

The next note begins, 'As the name "mass" was used after the introduction of the Reformed office, so that of "Lord's Supper" was used before,' a fact of which proofs are then adduced. This is of course intended to leave the notion on the reader's mind that the two words were considered to be perfectly indifferent so far as the issues of the Reformation were concerned. I will merely ask, Is this fair?

We now come to a very important and indeed cardinal point: the entire omission of the word 'altar' in the Liturgy of 1552 and the subsequent revisions. The fact is of course frankly admitted by the annotator, who endeavours to account for it:—

> The motive was the necessity of (1) disabusing the minds of the people of the gross and superstitious notions with reference to the Eucharistic sacrifice . . . . which had gradually grown up during the latter centuries of the mediæval period, and (2) of bringing back into its due prominence the truth of the doctrine of communion. The consequence of this (it is added) has been the partial obscuration of the sacrificial aspect of the Holy Eucharist, and the almost exclusive concentration of popular belief on its communion aspect.

Here it is implied, if not expressly intimated, that though the Reformers abandoned the word 'altar,' they did so for merely temporary reasons, and did not abandon the thing. It may be so; yet surely candour ought to have admitted that the abandonment furnishes a formidably strong argument to the supporters of the opposite view, and that so serious a change in language could not be made without committing the Church that accepted it. Far from allowing this, the annotator simply concerns himself to prove, from

the Bible and from general theological considerations, that the table *is* an altar, prefacing his argument by saying that 'only those ignorant of theology can maintain that there is any contradiction between the two.' The answer, of course, is that many persons (rightly or wrongly) have thought otherwise, that the framers of the Liturgy seem to agree with them, and that it is the sense of the Liturgy which is the question at issue. Two other statements are made, with the intention of proving that the Church of England holds the doctrine of the altar; that the word is still retained throughout in the form for the Coronation of the Kings and Queens of England in Westminster Abbey, and is used throughout the office of Institution of Ministers into Parishes or Churches, set forth in the General Convention of the American branch of the English Church in 1804 and 1808. It is difficult to see what argument can be based on the language of a formulary which does not appear to have been ever accepted either by Parliament or by Convocation, and which, being used only four or five times in a century, would naturally escape a thorough controversial revision, or on the words of a document adopted by a sister, but independent Church.

The next note, on the 'fair white linen cloth,' is much more satisfactory in its mode of argumentation, though its conclusion is, I think, a doubtful one. It remarks justly that to understand the force of a law, we must understand the meaning which was given to its words at the time when it was imposed; says that 'fayre' is translated 'pulcher, venustus, decorus, bellus,' in the 'Promptorium Parvulorum,' and that of the seventeen meanings assigned to the word in Johnson's Dictionary, only one, that answering to 'pulcher,' is found in the English Bible, the notion of cleanliness being expressed by 'clean' or 'pure;' and concludes that 'a fair white linen cloth'

must mean a white linen cloth rendered beautiful by ornamentation. It is somewhat singular that in examining the use of the word in the English Bible the annotator should have passed over one passage, Zechariah iii. 5: 'Let them set a fair mitre on his head.' I am no Hebraist, and cannot say what the force of the word in the original may be; but when I find the LXX. rendering κίδαριν καθαράν, the Vulgate 'cidarim mundam,' and a writer so unlikely to be swayed by LXX. or Vulgate traditions as De Wette, 'einen reinen Bund,' I can have little doubt what our translators meant. It seems to me also that an annotator trained in a stricter school of interpretation would have selected, as crucial instances of the use of 'fair,' passages where it might conceivably mean 'clean,' but, as a matter of fact, does not, not combinations like 'fair colours' and 'fair jewels,' where the meaning 'clean' is out of the question. No one doubts that 'fair' can mean 'beautiful,' and in connection with colours and jewels it can scarcely mean anything else. On the other hand, such an annotator would probably have remarked that 'fair' in the sixteenth century, as well as our own day, was constantly used in antithesis to 'dark,' so that 'fair white' may well be an intensified expression like 'spotless white;' and again, that it has also been for centuries contrasted with 'foul,' which then, as now, had a technical sense in connection with linen. I am only indicating such considerations as happen to occur to me, and such as would have been in place, in default of better, in commenting on an ancient author; but, of course, what is wanted is to adduce passages from authors of the sixteenth century where the words 'fair white' are found together, especially in connection with an article like linen; and the only book which is at hand to supply the defects of my reading,

Clarke's 'Concordance to Shakspeare,' furnishes me with none such.[1]

Passing over one or two other notes on the rubric, where the expression 'north side' is made the occasion for introducing facts and directions about altar curtains, and also the whole of the commentary on the early part of the Communion Service, in which, as was to be expected, not much controvertible matter occurs, I come to the Offertory. Here the annotator quotes the rubric of 1549, which runs as follows:—

> Then shall the minister take so much bread and wine as shall suffice for the persons appointed to receive the Holy Communion, laying the bread upon the corporas, or else in the paten, or in some other comely thing prepared for that purpose; and putting the wine into the chalice, or else in some fair or convenient cup prepared for that use (if the chalice will not serve), putting thereto a little pure and clean water, and setting both the bread and wine upon the altar.

He then proceeds:—

> The substance of this rubric is retained in that which immediately precedes the Prayer for the Church Militant, and its significance was heightened in the revision of 1661 by the introduction of the word 'oblation' into that prayer. The rubric and the words of the prayer together now give to our Liturgy as complete an oblation of the elements as is found in the ancient offices.

Now, considering that the existing rubric merely says, 'And when there is a communion, the priest shall then

[1] Since writing the above, I have met with a passage which confirms one of my surmises. Queen Elizabeth, in a letter to Parker and others dated January 22, 1560-1, speaks of 'the unclean or negligent order and sparekeeping of the house of prayer . . . . by appointing unmeet and unseemly tables with foul cloths for the communion of the sacraments.' (Correspondence of Parker, Parker Society, p. 133.)

place on the table so much bread and wine as he shall think sufficient,' we may fairly argue that whatever special significance there may be in its words is due, not to the words themselves, but to the prayer which follows them. It would be perfectly open to a Church which knew nothing of any sacrificial doctrine that the elements should be placed on the table by the priest, and at that particular time of the service. The fact that from 1552 to 1661 no direction existed on the subject, does not show that the direction had any higher object than decency or supposed convenience. Hickes, who agrees with the annotator in his view of its significance, complains that it had been 'almost never observed in cathedral or parochial churches:' 'I say almost never, because I never knew or heard but of two or three persons, which is a very small number, who observed it;' a fact scarcely to be accounted for, if it had been recognised from the first as having a doctrinal bearing. The meaning of the word 'oblations' is certainly a very difficult and doubtful question. No one can deny that, taken in connection with liturgical history, the word itself naturally suggests the notion of an offering of the elements; nor would I wish to give anything short of its due weight to the consideration that the Caroline divines who introduced it are likely to have wished to enforce that view. Yet there is at least equal force, I think, in the considerations adduced by Canon Robertson ('How shall we Conform to the Liturgy?' pp. 206. foll., second edition),[1] that the distinction between alms for the

[1] To the instances there quoted add Bishop Wren's *Orders and Directions*, No. xviii. (Cardwell's *Documentary Annals*, vol. ii. p. 205): 'That the holy oblations, in such places where it pleaseth God at any time to put into the hearts of His people by that holy action to acknowledge His gift of all they have to them, and their tenure of all from Him, and their debt of all to Him, be received by the minister standing before the table at their com-

poor and offerings for Church purposes was a common one in the seventeenth century, and that other alterations corresponding to this distinction were made by the same Caroline revisers in several of the rubrics. It might be added, that had Eucharistic oblation been intended, we should have expected it to be made a more prominent feature in the prayer, though to this it may be replied that the revisers, under all the circumstances, would naturally be content with a minimum of alteration. On the whole, it is perhaps safest to conclude with Canon Robertson that both senses were intended, if indeed it be not nearer the truth to say that a word was chosen in which various parties might unite, though attaching different senses to it. It is scarcely necessary to observe that, even if Eucharistic oblations alone be intended, this does not close the question of doctrine, as many persons not agreeing with the annotators in their full sacrificial view have, nevertheless, held that the elements may be offered to God as His gifts. I will only add an expression of regret that no trace of any attempt to compare antagonistic views on this very difficult point should be found in the notes before us.

The next note I have to notice is that which deals with the commemoration of the faithful departed at the end of the Church Militant Prayer. The annotator first says:—'In commemorating the departed at the time of celebrating the Holy Eucharist, the Church of England simply does as every known Church has done from the earliest age in which its liturgical customs can be traced.' He then quotes or refers to the Liturgies of St. James, St.

ing up to make the said oblation, and then by him to be reverently presented before the Lord, and set upon the table till the service be ended.' Wren was an intimate friend of Laud, and in perfect accordance with him, as Dr. Cardwell says, in matters of faith and discipline.

Mark, St. Clement, and St. Chrysostom, in each of which prayers are distinctly made for the dead. He concludes as follows:—

> It will thus be seen how great a deviation it would be from primitive Christianity to omit all mention of the deceased members of Christ, at the time when celebrating the great sacrament of love by which the whole Church is bonded together. And it must be considered as a great matter for thankfulness that in all the assaults made on the Liturgy of the Church of England by persons holding a more meagre belief in things unseen, the providence of God has preserved the prayer for the whole Church, departed as well as living, in the Prayer for the Church Militant.

The meaning of these sentences, as may be gathered by comparing them with a passage in the Introduction, p. 156, is this: The mention of the dead is made in the sentence at the conclusion of the prayer, where we bless God's name for the departed, and pray that we may follow their good examples; but this is linked on to the actual prayers for the dead contained in the earlier Liturgies, by the expression occurring afterwards in what is sometimes called the Prayer of Oblation (the Prayer for the Church Militant is mentioned by mistake), 'that . . . . . we and all Thy whole Church may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of His passion.' In the note on the passage in the Prayer of Oblation it is said:—

> The double supplication is here to be noticed. The prayer is that (1) *we* and (2) *all Thy whole Church*, and it is also that we may obtain remission of our sins, and that all Thy whole Church may receive *all other benefits* of His passion. The latter phrase looks towards the ancient theory of the Church, that the blessed sacrament was of use to the departed as well as to the living. It is a general term used by men who were fearful of losing all such commemoration, if inserted broadly and openly, but yet feared lest no gate should be left

open by which the intention of such commemoration could enter.

Now, if the two prayers are to be taken in connection with each other, there is one important point to be noted. In 1549 the Prayer for the Whole State of Christ's Church was not limited to the Church Militant on earth, but contained petitions for the dead as well as for the living. This fact would naturally govern the sense of the words, 'Thy whole Church,' occurring in the Prayer of Oblation. But with the alteration in the Prayer for the Whole State of Christ's Church the case is altered. The sense of the words in the Prayer of Oblation, if not governed differently, is at any rate left ungoverned. In themselves the words 'whole Church' have no determinate meaning. Whether they are taken in the widest possible sense, or in a more or less restricted one, must depend on the nature of the case. In the Authorised Version of the New Testament, where they occur three times,[1] their sense is more or less restricted. The question, then, whether or not in the Prayer of Oblation they apply to the dead, depends on the previous question whether the use of the Church of England recognises prayers for the dead. They do not interpret that use, but are interpreted by it. Meantime it is curious that the annotators, who refer in their Introduction to the words in the Prayer for the Sovereign, 'have mercy on the whole Church,' do not quote a passage from another prayer where the parallel is more complete, the conclusion of the Prayer for the Parliament. That prayer, as is shown in the first part of the present work, is based on a fast-day prayer, perhaps by Laud, where, as in our form, 'these and all other necessaries' are asked 'for them, for us, and Thy whole Church,'

[1] Acts xv. 22; Rom. xvi. 23; 1 Cor. xiv. 23.

Laud's private opinions of course are of no value in authoritative interpretation; but if he was the author of the Fast-day Prayer, it is likely enough that he intended his words to convey a sense which, as the annotator shows, Cosin, following Andrewes, wished to fix on the words now in question. But whether or not this sense be under the circumstances an admissible one in the present case, it is, as the annotator allows, rather latent than patent in the words as they stand in the present service; and it is rather surprising that the writer of the Introduction to the Liturgy, taking this passage in connection with that in the Prayer for the Church Militant, should say that, 'if the language used is more concise than formerly,' when the dead were distinctly prayed for, 'it cannot be said to be less comprehensive.'

The Exhortations open the question whether the formularies of the Church of England contemplate frequent or infrequent communions. So far as cathedrals, collegiate churches, and colleges go, the question is settled by the rubric at the end of the Communion Service, which enjoins celebration at least every Sunday. The writer of the Introduction goes further, and (it is difficult to say on what evidence, except the practice of the unreformed Church and some notices in the Liturgy of 1549) pronounces 'regular Sunday celebrations of the Holy Communion' to be 'the undoubted rule for every Church.' The annotator admits that 'the tone of the rubric and the Exhortations is plainly fitted to a time of infrequent communions,' but contends that this probably was owing to temporary reasons. There is more plausibility in this argument here than in other cases where it is applied to prove that the framers of the Liturgy held doctrines the expression of which they chose to omit, as the rubrics at the end of the service evidently imply that what the

framers feared was the paucity of communicants. Yet it would have been better if the view had not been enforced by a questionable piece of interpretation. 'The rubric does not seem to enjoin their constant use, but to require this form of exhortation to be used at those times when the minister thinks it necessary to "give warning," that is, to exhort his people, respecting "the celebration of the Holy Communion."' It would not be easy to persuade an ordinary reader that 'to give warning' is likely to mean anything else than 'to give notice;' and if he happens to be a student of Shakspeare, he will know that the expression in this sense was as familiar in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as it is now. Yet this sense is not even named in the note. Turning back, however, to a note on the earlier rubric before the sermon, I find the word 'warning' quoted apparently in its ordinary sense, so that there may be a difference of opinion on the matter between the annotators themselves.

In the note on the Prayer of Humble Access, the hypothesis of 'some temporary influence or danger' is again employed to account for the change in the position of the prayer, which the annotator, in common with Archbishop Laud, whom he quotes, appears to regret. My chief object, however, in referring to this prayer, is to make an admission which, it seems to me, candour requires, though the annotator himself has forborne to claim it explicitly. I believe it to be the one part of our present Communion Office where words occur which, understood in their natural and obvious sense, not only admit, but assert the doctrine of an objective presence. When we pray that we may 'so eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood that our sinful bodies may be made pure and our souls washed,' we necessarily imply that we might eat the flesh and drink the blood with a different

result. We imply, in short, what is contended for by Archdeacon Denison and Dr. Pusey with reference to the Twenty-ninth Article. And this was doubtless the intention of the original authors of the prayer, which is substantially the same as that in the Liturgy of 1549. Why the revisers of 1552, altering the prayer in one or two verbal points, left it intact in this respect, though in other parts of the service they seem to have wished to remove the traces of the doctrine in question, is a point on which I do not seek to offer an hypothesis. It is of more importance to estimate what consequences are involved in the admission which, as I have said, I feel bound to make. That the more definite and dogmatic part of the formularies ought to interpret (for purposes of Church conformity) the less definite and dogmatic seems only reasonable, though I am of course aware that it has been much questioned. Looking to Art. XXIX., I will only say, without entering into the question in detail, for which this is hardly the place, that its natural meaning seems to me to deny that our Lord is present in the elements to the good and the wicked alike. On the other hand, apart from controversy, there appears to me nothing in the words of the prayer which need jar on the feelings of a worshipper who believes that the presence is confined to the faithful. 'Lex supplicanti, lex credendi,' so far as it is true, surely applies to the general character of our prayers, not to the logical implication of each expression. Still, when a dogmatic issue is raised, I feel that the words I speak of ought to be allowed their full weight in determining what is the mind of the Church of England on the subject; nor should I think it just if a divine of an opposite school to that of the annotators were simply to dismiss the question by saying that the words were doubtless retained merely for temporary reasons, and that con-

sequently they need not be taken into account in forming a conclusion. If we wish (as for purposes of Church conformity we must wish) to form a conception of the general doctrine of the Church of England on a given point, we cannot avoid the responsibility of deciding which of two apparently antagonistic statements must give way to the other; but it is not the less incumbent on us, before making the decision, to give each its distinct force, as explained according to the natural rules of language.

With regard to the precise force of the words used by the priest in delivering the elements, there will of course be difference of opinion, according to the view taken of the effect of the act of consecration. The effect of the substitution of the words 'take and eat,' &c., for 'the Body,' &c., made by the revisers of 1552, can scarcely be misunderstood. The Elizabethan Reformers joined the two forms of delivery together, for which they are commended by L'Estrange, whom the annotator quotes, and apparently by the annotator himself. But it will hardly be contended that the combination does not leave it open to those whose convictions so require to understand the first part of the words of delivery as a prayer that through the medium of the elements about to be received the spiritual blessing of communion may be conferred, without being committed to any belief in a change having passed on the elements by virtue of the prayer of consecration. We must remember, what the annotator does not bring out with sufficient definiteness in his text and notes, though by printing the Liturgy of 1549 in an Appendix he enables the reader to verify the matter, that the most important words in the prayer of consecration do not stand now as they did in 1549. Then the prayer was that the bread and wine might be sanctified

so as to become to the recipients the Body and Blood; now it is that the congregation, receiving the bread and wine, may be partakers of the Body and Blood,—words which, it is evident, admit a wider latitude of dogmatic belief.

I now come to one or two notes on minor points.

The direction in the rubric to deliver the elements to the people 'in order' is explained: '*i.e.*, first to the men and then to the women, according to the practice in the best-ordered churches.' This is an endeavour, of which there are many in the book, to combine the office of a Directorium with that of a Commentary, a union of functions which I think does not conduce to scrupulous care in commenting. So the words 'in their hands' are explained in accordance with a direction of St. Cyril, that the bread is to be taken, not in the fingers, but in the palm of the right hand; no mention being made of the fact, which a commentator would naturally have thought more germain to his province, that the words are a substitute for a direction in a rubric of 1549, according to which the communicants were to receive the sacrament of Christ's body in their mouths.

In commenting on the direction to 'place what remaineth of the consecrated elements reverently on the Lord's table,' the annotator argues that the word 'reverently,' occurring as it does among a number of rubrics which have been greatly cut down from their original fulness, must point to a belief in an actual change of the elements. 'Were the elements sacred only so far as they were partaken of, there could be no reason for specially directing the priest to place what remaineth *reverently* on the Lord's table, for no more reverence to them would be needed than that respect which is shown for everything used at the Holy Communion.' I should have thought that a church just emerging from the Puritan period (the rubric

was added in 1661) might naturally have used the word without necessarily implying any such further meaning as is supposed. The annotator himself in the Appendix reprints the Presbyterian Office with reluctance, calling it a 'presumptuous and irreverent parody of the Liturgy;' and whether or not the Caroline bishops would have expressed themselves as strongly about that particular form of ritual, they must have been cognisant of much undoubted irreverence which might well call for a single word of warning even from men disposed to be sparing in their injunctions.

I have already adverted to the remarks in the Introduction on the alteration of the position of the Prayer of Oblation. It is now time to speak of that part of the argument which depends not on general presumption, but on a consideration of the service itself. The first assertion in the Introduction, that the act of consecration, apart from any express words of oblation, is itself an act of sacrifice, is felt by the annotator not to be absolutely conclusive; in fact, it begs the question. A further reason for regarding the scope of the prayer as not substantially altered by its change of position, is that the remainder of the consecrated elements has just been replaced on the table, so that of them at any rate an oblation may be made.[1] Yet, to one looking at the question dispassionately, it would seem strange that a Church that wished to enforce the doctrine of Eucharistic oblation should solemnly offer, not the elements as a whole, but that part of them which may happen to be left over in the event of the priest having consecrated more than is sufficient. Accordingly, the change is re-

[1] I have taken this argument as it stands in the Introduction; whether it is quite identical with that in the note, which is somewhat less definitely expressed, I am not sure.

gretted; and we are told, as in the Preface, that Bishop Overall disregarded it, and Bishop Cosin thought it accidental. This last supposition the annotator regards with some favour, though it would seem in the last degree unlikely that the revisers of 1552, or any other period, would acquiesce, in a matter of such importance, in what they must have known to be a printer's error.[1] Would not a commentator on an ordinary text have thought it worth his while to mention that there was another interpretation which at any rate had the merit of taking the prayer as it stands, to the effect that by the Eucharistic sacrifice is meant the whole act of worship, and by the oblation an oblation of ourselves? It is not pretended that this would have exhausted the meaning of the words as they were originally used in the Liturgy of 1549; but the question is whether the change in the position of the prayer does not naturally limit and modify the meaning.

I have now only to notice the note about the Declaration on Kneeling. It lays stress, justly enough, on the fact that the revisers of 1661, in reviving it after a century of disuse, did so with a change in the wording of one part, 'corporal presence' being substituted for 'real and essential presence.' I quite agree with Dr. Pusey[2] that 'it is a paradox to say that while the reformers of the rubric deliberately ejected what its framers deliberately inserted, it is all one as if they had not ejected it and substituted another word:' that indeed is precisely what I have been urging throughout with respect to the changes introduced in the successive revisions. The change of the words no doubt removes the denial of a real and essential presence. Whether it affects the declara-

[1] We know as a fact that Cranmer was ordered to correct such printer's errors as actually occurred. (Introduction to *Annotated Prayer-Book*, p. 31.)

[2] *Real Presence the Doctrine of English Church*, p. 322.

tion in any way is a different question. For we are told in the declaration not only what kneeling does not import, but what it does import. The order to kneel, it is said, 'is well meant, for a signification of our humble and grateful acknowledgment of the benefits therein' (in the sacrament) 'given to all worthy receivers, and for the avoiding of such profanation and disorder in the Holy Communion as might otherwise ensue.' This, however, touches a question which the annotator does not raise, the question of Eucharistic adoration. Meanwhile I would only observe that, in accepting Mr. Perry's view that the original declaration of 1552 was probably intended merely as a protest against the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the low notion of a carnal presence which had come to be the interpretation too commonly put on the phrase 'real and essential presence,' the annotator differs from Dr. Pusey, who says,[1] 'They who first framed the sentence moulded it carefully to exclude the Real Presence altogether.'

I have ventured to maintain that the radical fault of this commentary is its having been written under the influence of a theory, that theory being the substantial identity of the Eucharistic doctrine, as contained in the present Liturgy, with that of its various predecessors. It may be said, however, that we have distinct warrant for assuming this identity at the very point where the breach of continuity has been alleged to be most patent, the substitution of the Liturgy of 1552 for that of 1549. The Act of Parliament establishing Edward's Second Prayer-Book declares the first to be 'a very godly order, agreeable to the Word of God and the primitive Church, very comfortable to all Christian people desiring to live in Christian conversation, and most profitable to the state

[1] *Real Presence the Doctrine of English Church*, p. 322.

of the realm;' and speaks of the doubts about the manner of using it as having arisen 'rather by the curiosity of the ministers and mistakers than of any other worthy cause.' Such an argument, however, if it proves anything, proves too much. The Elizabethan Act of Uniformity endorses the Second Prayer-Book of Edward, minimizing the changes made in it, and saying in particular of the Liturgy that two sentences only are added: but would it be fair to contend from this mode of speech that the two sentences in question, those added in the form of the delivery of the elements, are of no importance? If it be said that the words in Edward's Act of Uniformity are stronger, it may be replied that the charges then made were much more extensive. 'Qui s'excuse, s'accuse:' the Parliament which issued the Second Book was the same that had issued the First Book, and it would scarcely have proclaimed the fact that the two books seriously differed from each other. Besides, the argument is two-edged: while some use it to prove that the Second Book means no less than the First, others use it to prove that the First Book means no more than the Second, which is indeed said in this very Act of Parliament to 'explain and make it fully perfect.'[1] After all, the question is not what may be inferred about the meaning of our formularies from the brief and general words of an Act of Parliament, but what the formularies, naturally interpreted, witness about themselves. Whatever the Parliament of 1552 thought about the First

[1] The case appears to stand thus. As a question of reason, it would seem that the more explicit document should interpret the less explicit. As a question of authority, the later ought to interpret the earlier. But it is only the presumed authority of the Parliament of 1552 which would lead us to interpret either document by the other; therefore, if we are to entertain such considerations at all, we must go by authority, not by reason.

Book weighs but little against the fact that they superseded it.[1] Ἐν τῷ λέγειν καινήν, πεπαλαίωκεν τὴν πρώτην.

My object in making these remarks has been to register a protest—a temperate one, I would hope—against what I cannot but regard as an unsatisfactory mode of commenting on the Prayer-Book. I admit readily that there is room in the Church of England for more doctrinal schools than one; and that being so, it is necessary that each school should have a theory for reconciling its own belief with the formularies. But this, it seems to me, is a separate question from the interpretation of the formularies, and ought to be kept distinct. Let us first interpret the formularies according to the strict rules of interpretation; let us then consider what degree of license may be fairly claimed in each particular case by members of a Church which has never been without parties, and has passed at different times under the more especial influence of one or other of them. Even as interpreters we might often disagree; but we should profit increasingly by each other's labours, and we should learn to recognise more thoroughly the common ground on which we stand.

[1] If Parliament were to enact that certain formularies, imposed by its authority, were to be understood in a certain sense, that sense would be imperative, even if it did not happen to be the natural one. But a legislature is hardly likely to go to this length; and nothing short of it would interfere with the original duty of ascertaining what the formularies mean from what they say.

BISHOP FORBES ON THE ARTICLES.[1]

I LATELY commented in this Review on some unsatisfactory, because inexact and arbitrary, interpretations of the Communion Service.[2] I now wish to call attention to a series of explanations of the Thirty-nine Articles,[3] which appears to me to be open to a similar objection.

It would not seem to be very difficult to lay down generally what is required in a commentary on the Articles. They should be interpreted, like any other statement of opinions, according to the natural meaning of the words, taken in significant connection with each other, with their context, and, in case of doubt, with the rest of the document, recourse being had, where it may be needful, to the theological history of the time, and specially to the writings of the framers of the Articles, and of others who are known to have sympathised with them. This is the way in which the true sense of a document of the kind is likely to be ascertained; and it would seem obvious, as I have said, that it is to be employed in the present case. The meaning of the Articles being thus arrived at, it is a separate, though of course a very important, task to estimate the bearing of their meaning on the general doctrine of the Church of England, to harmonise apparently conflicting results, and to obtain a view of the mind of the Church on the various points on which questions may be raised. There is again a third inquiry which also has its place, though of an inferior and subordinate kind. There

[1] Reprinted from the *Contemporary Review*, July 1868.

[2] See preceding Article.

[3] *An Explanation of the Thirty-nine Articles*, by A. P. Forbes, D.C.L., Bishop of Brechin. Oxford: Parker, 1867–1868.

are different schools within the Church of England, which in one form or other have existed for the last three centuries, if not for a longer period; and as it is not only possible but likely that no one of them exactly expresses the mind of the Church on all doctrinal points, it is natural to inquire what limits of divergence may be allowed to each in the case of this or that matter of belief. This is of course a casuistical question depending on many minute considerations; but it is of consequence to the whole body of churchmen, as well as to the particular section concerned, not only that it should be entertained, but that it should be determined fairly and reasonably. These, it is plain, are distinct tasks; and though the temptation may be great to confuse them in practice, I believe it is in proportion as they are kept distinct that each is likely to be satisfactorily performed.

If these remarks are true, it seems evident that a work which, like Bishop Forbes's, professes to explain the Articles on a particular theory commits a fundamental mistake. The interpretation of the Articles requires no theory, and admits none. Particular passages may be doubtful, and with reference to them these or those external considerations may be legitimately employed; but to interpret the whole in the light of an external theory is self-condemnatory. As English churchmen, we may be bound, as Bishop Forbes thinks we are, to hold what is called the Catholic theory of belief. If the Articles express that theory, they will say so when interrogated by the ordinary methods of inquiry. Protestant tradition may have encrusted them; but there are recognised, though it may be slow, methods of removing all such encrustations. If the Articles, fairly interpreted, are not Catholic, it may still be possible, by taking them in connection with other statements of the Church's belief, to

produce on the whole a Catholic result. If this again cannot be made out, it is open to contend that there are certain limits beyond the strict line of the formularies within which Catholic opinion has a standing-ground in the Church of England. But no supposed duty to Catholic truth can warrant us in explaining the Articles in any other sense than that which may appear on detailed examination to be the sense of the Articles themselves.

But it will be right to expound Bishop Forbes's theory somewhat more fully before proceeding to comment on his practice. This is indeed not so easy as it may appear at first sight, as, though he expressly states that he has a theory, the precise nature of it is not so much to be found explicitly stated in any one passage of his work as to be collected from several. I am not sure that I altogether comprehend it: I am not sure that he is in these different passages absolutely consistent with himself; but I believe that in what I am going to say I shall not far misrepresent him.

Bishop Forbes seems to arrive at his mode of interpreting the Articles, so to say, by a sort of double route. It is with him a question of duties; of duty to the Articles themselves, and of duty to Catholic belief. To the first he evidently attaches comparatively little importance. The Articles are an uninspired document, and there is a *primâ facie*, though it may be unavoidable, hardship in requiring assent to them. Clergymen and others are bound to them simply because they have subscribed them: the obligation is to be interpreted legally, and the document itself to be construed with a legal literalness which takes the text sentence by sentence, and does not trouble itself with deductions and implications. 'The plain literal and grammatical sense, interpreted by the hardest legal head, is all that we have to do with in accepting the text: and as

regards the inferences, we have nothing whatever to do with them.'[1] The duty to the Articles being thus discharged, another duty begins. The obligations of Catholic truth require that the Articles should be understood in a Catholic sense, and it is to this that the legal interpretation is calculated to pave the way. The one creates the vacuum (it is Bishop Forbes's own image applied to legal interpretation in another connection[2]); the other comes and fills it. Our right to regard the Articles in this light is strengthened by historical considerations, by a view of the Elizabethan age, when they were tendered to the acceptance of a clergy oscillating between old and new beliefs, and by a reference to the disputes of the Caroline period, when the literal and grammatical sense was maintained by the king and the bishops, and denounced by the Puritans as Jesuitical and Arminian.

Such, so far as I am able to ascertain it, is Bishop Forbes's theory; and yet, as I have intimated already, I am not sure that I have exhibited it rightly. Perhaps he is not altogether consistent with himself in what he says about his own canon of interpretation. He claims to be bound by the literal sense of the Articles; yet he seems to admit that those whose historical position he defends as the true one, the Catholic party in the Elizabethan age of the Church, imported into them preconceived notions foreign to their letter, just as he says is now done by Low Churchmen.[3] So there is something not easily explicable in his comment on the Royal Declaration. 'The Caroline bishops knew very well what they were doing; so did the Puritans. No wonder that these latter sought to stigma-

[1] Vol. ii. p. 805.

[2] 'The object of lawyers, according to the principle of acquitting one criminated if possible, is to evacuate the meaning of terms whereby the Church has defined and guarded the faith.'—Vol. ii. p. 766.

[3] Vol. i. p. xxi.

tise the sense' enjoined by the Declaration 'as Jesuitical and Arminian. The instinct of Puritanism was naturally aroused; the Declaration was the enunciation of the Catholic sense of the Articles; Tract XC. and the Eirenicon are legitimate outcomes of the King's Declaration.'[1] Now, if the contention of the Caroline bishops is rightly represented by the Declaration, it was not for a bare literal lawyer's sense, but for a meaning variously described as 'the true, usual, literal meaning,' 'the plain and full meaning,' 'the literal and grammatical sense'—for that, in short, for which most clergymen, of whatever party, would contend in the present day. The Puritans thought the reformed formularies required yet further reformation, and so gave the High Churchmen the advantage of appearing as defenders of the *status quo*. But Bishop Forbes seems to imply that there was more in the controversy than this—that the struggle was really for a Catholic or non-Catholic sense. If this was so, I think that the Puritans, whose strong language in the discussions on the question is generally contrasted unfavourably with the moderation of their opponents, had really some justification for their vituperative epithets. On the whole, I cannot feel certain whether Bishop Forbes conceives himself to be interpreting the Articles naturally or not.[2] The best hypothesis I can form is that which I have given above, that he first interprets them like a lawyer, in order that he may after-

[1] Vol. i. p. xl.

[2] His account of his own relation to the Articles is as follows:—'I can sign them myself in "the literal and grammatical sense," that is, taking sentence by sentence as a lawyer would do; and when the plain and full meaning alluded to in the Declaration is doubtful, I supplement any deficiency by the interpretation of the other subscriptions which I have made and the documents I am bound to: so that not having the necessity to call in to my aid more than the most moderate help of such laws of explanation as all men practically need in the interpretation of every oath, obligation, pledge, or subscription, I feel that I am in the position of being able to come to a pretty impartial opinion on the subject of relaxation.'—Vol. i. pp. viii., ix.

wards interpret them as a Catholic divine; but I cannot say how far he consciously realises to himself this twofold process.

Possibly, in one respect, Bishop Forbes's theory may appear to have something in common with the principles of interpretation laid down at the beginning of this paper. He remarks that 'it is very difficult now to throw oneself into the mind of the framers of the Articles at their last revision,' intimating that this is what we ought to do if we wish to approach them properly. It is, indeed, a duty which a judicious commentator would not only admit, but enforce. But I do not think Bishop Forbes equally satisfactory in his way of acting on it. What he does is to show at some length, and by various proofs, that a large portion of the nation and the clergy was Catholic at the time of Elizabeth's accession, and to argue that, as only a few of the clergy refused the Articles, the remainder of the Catholic party must either have been consciously dishonest, or must have submitted in a Catholic sense. Now if it can be proved or made probable that the Articles, or any portions of them, were worded in a particular way in order to conciliate this section of the Church, the fact is, of course, important with reference to the interpretation of the document in whole or in part. Bishop Forbes does attempt this in a few places in the body of his commentary: in these cases, of course, due weight ought to be given to the argument. But simply to argue that because such and such persons signed such and such statements, therefore the statements must have a sense corresponding to the belief of the signers, is surely very insecure reasoning at best. If the Articles were an undeciphered inscription, such evidence as to their meaning might be acceptable for want of better. As it is, to interpret the Articles by the supposed conviction of the Catholics who

originally signed them, rather than by their own words, is something like the task imposed on the hero of mythology, of hitting an object which he was only allowed to see as reflected in a vessel of oil. In their proper place these considerations have their importance. They affect not the interpretation of the Articles, but what I have called the casuistical question of the license to be allowed to schools of opinion in the Church, over and above the ascertained meaning of the formularies. In an inquiry like that, Shakspeare and Machyn's 'Diary' may be tendered in evidence to prove that half the people of England were Catholic at the time when the Articles were originally imposed. But the poet and the London citizen will scarcely help us to ascertain what the framers of the Articles meant by the terms in which they expressed their own and the Reformed Church's belief.

Another thing still remains to be noticed before I examine Bishop Forbes's commentary in detail. He declares that 'the Articles have suffered from being always treated controversially,' and accordingly proposes to turn them 'from transitory controversies of the sixteenth century to those immutable truths which have been taught in the Church and by the Church in all ages.' Two important things are here assumed; that certain controversies are transitory, and that certain truths are immutable. If it should prove that the controversies assumed to be transitory are still being waged on substantially the same grounds as in the Elizabethan age, and that the truths assumed to be immutable are propositions which one party in the Church, and that one especially attached to the Articles, regards as more than questionable, I think we shall not doubt that this mode of dealing with the Articles is really as controversial as that which it professes to supersede, while it has the disadvantage of using the

Articles for a purpose which is, to say the least, not that which they were intended to serve. 'For example,' he says, 'the Romish doctrine of pardons, alluded to in Article XXII., was a perversion of the belief and practice of the penitential discipline of the Church. It shall be my duty to show what that penitential discipline was, and so of the rest.' Is Bishop Forbes, however, quite sure that, in distinguishing between the truth and the perversion, he is drawing the line exactly where the Church of England would draw it? In his exposition of that part of the Article he makes no attempt to define the doctrine of the English formularies, or even to construct a catena on the subject from the writings of English divines: he casually mentions the address at the beginning of the Commination Service; but the bulk of his comment consists of a brief historical sketch, embracing the early Church, the mediæval Church, and the decisions of the Council of Trent, the canon by which truth is distinguished from error being nowhere defined or stated. Few things, indeed, are likely to strike a reader more than the absence of reference to Anglican authority in a work purporting to be a constructive exhibition of Anglican doctrine. A chain of English divines is at best only a secondary and subsidiary witness to the teaching of the Church of England, but it would seem to be more in place in a commentary on the Articles than extracts from schoolmen or from modern Roman Catholics.

Descending from generalities to details, I must beg to confine myself almost entirely to Bishop Forbes's exposition of the anti-Roman Articles. They, it is needless to point out, are the real test of the canon of interpretation which he adopts. Even of these I shall not notice all.

The first five Articles I pass over *sicco pede*, merely

stopping for a moment to note a single point. In pursuance of his design of explaining the Articles constructively, Bishop Forbes seizes the opportunity presented by the words of the Second, 'in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, of her substance,' to enforce at some length the honour due to the Virgin. The same thing is done later at greater length in a more singular connection, in the process of commenting on Article XV., 'Of Christ alone without Sin,' where we are first assured that the Virgin and some of the saints are exceptions to the language of the Article, and then instructed in the true view of the dignity of the Mother of our Lord. This, it is hardly necessary to say, is not commenting on the Articles, but supplementing and correcting them. Nor can it be said that these supplements and corrections are derived from other portions of the teaching of the English Church. In the exposition of the Second Article, indeed, a passage speaking honourably of the Virgin is quoted from a sermon of Latimer's—one of the very few cases in which an English divine is appealed to at all in the work: in the other place references are made to two passages in the Prayer-Book, and two in the Homilies. Of these, Latimer's is of course merely an individual authority, while Bishop Forbes would himself contend that the sanction given to the Homilies by Article XXXV. cannot be taken as extending to all their details: the passages from the Prayer-Book speak of our Lord as 'born of a pure Virgin,' words which it is a mere assumption to interpret of freedom from sin, and of His being 'made very man of her substance, and that without spot of sin,' where our Lord's nature would seem to be specially distinguished from His mother's in respect of sinlessness. No notice meanwhile is taken of the facts, surely significant ones, that, with the exception of this incidental mention of the Virgin in the Second Article, the Articles are completely silent about her, and that in

the Collects for the two festivals associated with her name, that name is omitted altogether, the event commemorated being regarded simply in its relation to Christ.

The Sixth and Twentieth Articles resemble each other so much in the ground they traverse that it seems natural to treat them together. Yet, though connected, they are by no means identical. The Sixth is confined to the truth taught, but says nothing about the teacher, who may be an individual or a Church. It simply denies that the teacher, whoever he may be, has any right to enforce any doctrine as necessary to salvation which is not to be found in or collected from Scripture. The Twentieth recognises the Church as an expounder of Scripture, declares that it may not expound Scripture contradictorily, or teach anything contravening it, and repeats the prohibition against enforcing anything beyond Scripture as of necessity to salvation. I think, then, that a commentator anxious for clearness of exposition would have reserved what he had to say on the teaching power as much as possible for his explanation of the Twentieth Article. Bishop Forbes, however, treats the two questions together, and we may as well follow him in doing so. Apparently fearing that the Sixth Article, if left alone, would be misunderstood, he supplies the requisite correction :—

> It (the Article) says nothing against the acceptance of whatever the Church proposes for our belief, because whatsoever is so proposed to us must rest ultimately on the authority of Scripture, of which the Church is the guardian and the expounder. All that it seeks to protect the faithful against is the enforcement on them, as requisite to salvation, of individual opinions, which, being without the authentication of Church authority, have consequently no Scriptural authority.

This is constructive explanation, certainly. A cautious expositor would have remarked, 'Nothing is said here about the office of the Church as a teacher.' Bishop

Forbes tells us that nothing is said derogatory to the office of the Church as a teacher, because, in fact, nothing can be said, the teaching of a doctrine by the Church being the only criterion we have of knowing whether it is contained in Scripture. All that is forbidden is the unscriptural teaching of individuals; and even that is not to be tested by Scripture, but by the authority which is the criterion of Scriptural doctrine, the Church. Now this may be the meaning of the Article, but it can hardly be said to lie on its surface, much less to be expressed in its title, 'The sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for salvation;' and considering how many persons, not only at the present day, but at the time of the Reformation, were in the habit of attaching a different and (according to Bishop Forbes) erroneous meaning to the words, 'sufficiency of Scripture,' it seems a little inconsiderate in the framers of the Article not to have expressed their mind on the matter more clearly. Meantime, it is strange that Bishop Forbes, after saying that *all* that the Article seeks to protect the faithful against is the enforcement of unauthorised opinions by individuals, proceeds in the very next sentence to say that the Article would condemn any accretive development by the Church which would add to the substance of the faith. The Article then is to guard us not merely against what individuals may do, but against what the Church may do. But why not say this plainly at the outset? If the Article is to be explained constructively, let us know what is involved in its constructive teaching. Does it mean that when the Church professes that its doctrine is contained in or deducible from Scripture, the doctrine is to be accepted; but that when it professes to be teaching an accretive development, the development is to be rejected? It can scarcely mean anything else; for if the individual

is to be the judge whether a doctrine is a deduction or an accretion, the whole of Bishop Forbes's exposition falls to the ground. On the whole, I interpret Bishop Forbes's interpretation of the Article to mean that the Article is addressed not to the individual, but to the Church in its teaching capacity, recognising the power of the Church, but warning it to be careful how it exercises that power. If the Church neglects the warning, and teaches as a deduction what is really an accretion, individuals, it would seem, must accept it without interposing their own judgment.[1]

I do not mean, of course, to maintain that the doctrine of the framers of the Articles on this subject is clear and unembarrassed. They nowhere assert the right of the individual to judge whether the teaching of the Church is scriptural or not. But the persistence with which they insist upon the Scripture as the rule of faith, and the emphasis with which they deny that the Church has any right to add to or contradict it, are hardly consistent in moral effect, whatever they may be in logic, with Bishop Forbes's constructive doctrine that the individual can only know that a thing is scriptural from the fact of its being taught by the Church. To borrow an illustration of his own, a charter given by a king to his subjects, which dwelt repeatedly and emphatically on his possible violations of duty, would hardly leave on their minds the impression that they had no right in any case to judge whether such a violation had been committed.

I go to Article X. Here Bishop Forbes begins his comment thus :—

> This is one of the instances in which the title of the Article does not correspond accurately with its contents. In the Article there is no direct assertion of the free will of man, nor

[1] See vol. i. p. 101, where this seems to be explicitly asserted.

definition of its meaning, though it is implied in its very limitation. The Article ought really to be termed, 'Of the Necessity of Divine Grace.'

This criticism is only applicable if we accept Bishop Forbes's view of the doctrine of the Church of England on the subject of Free Will. He asserts that men in their natural condition have free will, and censures Luther for denying it. If he is right, the Article certainly does seem to be rather strangely drawn up. But if we suppose that the framers of the Article did not hold Bishop Forbes's doctrine, the difficulty vanishes. Let the Article be understood to mean that man in his natural state has no effectual free will for good, but that such a free will can only be given to him by the grace of God, and the title 'Of Free Will' is seen to be appropriate enough. I do not say that the Article goes to the full length of the Lutheran doctrine, or that Bishop Forbes does not satisfy its meaning when he says, 'No one by his natural powers can obtain actual grace, or the beginning of spiritual life.' But I think that his adoption of a form of thought confessedly different from that which found favour with the reforming divines has prevented him from seeing the plain intention of the Article.

In the Thirteenth Article, again, Bishop Forbes takes exception to the title. 'It would be correct,' he says, 'if it were worded, "Of some Works before Justification."' No doubt the title does present a difficulty. A person may cordially agree with the Article that 'works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of His Spirit are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ,' and yet hesitate to affirm the same of 'Works before Justification.' The case of the heathen is one which the framers of the Article might reasonably decline to deal with: the case of Cornelius they might fairly have been expected to consider. There would

be no difficulty in admitting that Cornelius had faith in Christ, according to the proposition laid down in the Seventh Article: there would be considerable difficulty in maintaining that he was justified in the theological sense. How the framers of the Article would have dealt with the difficulty, had their attention been drawn to it, I do not pretend to say, but I do not think they would have agreed with Bishop Forbes in introducing the word 'some' into their title, and thus practically stultifying the title itself. The question of the authority of the titles of the Articles is one which will meet us again when we come to Article XXIX. I do not think they are to be forced into agreement with the meaning, real or supposed, of the body of the Articles which they respectively precede; but there can be no doubt that individual subscribers may be allowed the benefit of any difference which may appear to exist between a doctrine as stated in the Article and a doctrine as stated in the title. It needs no general theory of subscription, Catholic or Puritan, to make us realise the fact that those to whom the Articles were originally tendered must have been allowed that latitude; for it is only what would be allowed in the present day in case any new set of Articles were proposed to the acceptance of members of the Church. But this, as I have already insisted, is a question not of explanation, but of that adjustment of opinions which comes in after explanation has done its work.

The Seventeenth Article affords a very conspicuous instance of Bishop Forbes's method of interpretation. He gives an interesting sketch of the history of the Predestinarian controversy, showing how the circumstances of the Reformation tended to divert men's thoughts from the security offered by their connection with the Church to some more personal and individual ground of confidence.

He contrasts the extreme language of Calvin with the more guarded expressions of the Article, and observes that as a matter of fact the Article never satisfied the Puritans. Thus he prepares the way for his own explanation, which is that 'God's predestination is bestowed on every baptized Christian.' How much is assumed in this I need not point out. A student of the Articles will be tempted to ask the question whether Bishop Forbes can really have read through the Article on which he comments. The very first sentence of the Article tells us that the counsel of God in predestination is secret to us, and that those who are so chosen by God are brought to everlasting salvation; whereas baptismal predestination is a known, visible thing, and need not be finally effectual. What makes the matter stranger is that Bishop Forbes, in a note, calls attention to the fact that the words 'licet prædestinationis decreta sint nobis ignota' occurred in Edward VI.'s Articles, but were erased by Parker. He perceives the relevancy of this omission to his view of the Article, but does not notice that the equivalent words, 'suo consilio nobis quidem occulto,' are still retained.[1] He fortifies his interpretation by saying that 'no interpretation of this Article can be the right one which is at variance with the statements in Articles XXI., V., and XI.,' where it is asserted that the offer of salvation is made to all. No one, of course, will deny that these Articles do present a difficulty, as compared with the Article before us; but the difficulty is not one which the framers of the Articles made, but which they found in the Bible, and to assume that it must be solved in Bishop Forbes's way is, as I have just said, to assume a great deal.

[1] The author of the letter supposed to be by Bishop Geste (see below) wishes to strike out these words, but on grounds different from Bishop Forbes's interpretation. See Parry, *Declaration on Kneeling*, pp. 195 foll.

Meanwhile it is important to notice that Bishop Forbes here distinctly asserts the principle that the Articles are to be interpreted by each other—*i. e. not*, as he says in the Epistle Dedicatory, 'taking sentence by sentence as a lawyer would do.'

In the comment on the Nineteenth Article there is a singular piece of verbal explanation. Quoting the words, 'As the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch have erred, so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in *their* living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith,' he proceeds to say: 'The emphatic word here is *their*. It refers to the human side of the Church, or rather to the individuals in the Church who do not live up to the graces bestowed on them.' Has Bishop Forbes read the Latin article, which he prints on the same page with the English? If so, he must have seen that the framers were so careless as to omit this emphatic word altogether when writing in another language. 'Sicut erravit Ecclesia Hierosolymitana, Alexandrina, et Antiochena, ita et erravit Ecclesia Romana, non solum quoad agenda et cærimoniarum ritus, verum in his etiam quæ credenda sunt.' Surely it is unnecessary to state that *their* must be understood (whether idiomatically or not is another question) of the four Churches spoken of, each of which is declared to have erred in the ways described.

I now come to the Articles which bear most on the controversies of the present day—those on the Sacraments. On these Bishop Forbes is more copious than on most of the others, and his reviewer must be more copious also.

The latter part of Article XXV. says, 'The sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them.' Bishop Forbes's comment is:—

In this sentence the stress is on the words, 'were not ordained of Christ to be,' &c. The Article does not say that the things spoken of may not be done, but that they were not *the* objects for which Christ ordained them. Had they been, they could not have been laid aside without sin. Being of ecclesiastical, not of Divine institution, they were mutable, not immutable. What it affirms is strictly historically true.

Those who attend to the language of the Articles on the Sacraments will have little doubt that the reason why the institution of Christ is dwelt on is because that, in the judgment of the framers, was the one thing of paramount importance. The five so-called 'Sacramentals' are rejected in this very Article, because they have not any visible sign or ceremony *ordained of God*: the two Sacraments are called Sacraments ordained of Christ: 'Christ's ordinance' and 'Christ's institution and promise' are put prominently forward in Article XXVI. as the basis on which sacramental efficacy rests: Infant Baptism is enjoined in Article XXVII. as most agreeable with the institution of Christ: Article XXX. prescribes the administering of the Communion in both kinds on the ground of Christ's ordinance and commandment. Besides, the words of the passage before us are sufficient to show that the framers of the Article intended to disparage those uses of the Sacrament which Bishop Forbes thinks indifferent or laudable. What else can be the meaning of saying, 'were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, &c., *but that we should duly use them*?'[1] The inference surely is, that other applications of the Sacrament are not legitimate. Again, on Bishop Forbes's hypothesis, what is the error against which the statement in the Article is levelled? Did anybody ever assert that the Sacraments

[1] A contemporary comment on these words is supplied by Bishop Geste, Treatise against Private Mass, pp. 123, 124 of Dugdale's *Life of Geste*, a reference which I owe to Mr. Sedley Taylor's pamphlet.

were ordained of Christ for either of the purposes first named? Bishop Forbes himself answers the question in the words immediately following those which I have quoted. 'By carrying the Sacraments about, we are probably to understand the procession of the Corpus Domini. *No person in his senses would say that this was ordained of Christ.*' Would any person in his senses think of formally denying what no one in his senses would assert? It is true that the Tridentine decrees distinguish between the facts of Christ's institution and the ulterior purposes and variations which the Church has introduced. The former they admit, as they could not avoid doing; the latter they assert as holding good nevertheless. But the admission would be a barren truism without the subsequent assertion; and to supply the assertion *ex ingenio* is an effort of constructive exposition which sound interpretation will hardly warrant.

The five so-called 'Sacramentals' are defended by Bishop Forbes, including Extreme Unction, 'the lost Pleiad,' as he calls it, 'of the Anglican firmament.' But as his defence does not lead him to wrest the language of the Articles, though he thinks it 'awkward and embarrassed,' and also 'unfortunate,' it does not come within the scope of this paper to criticise it. We may even note with satisfaction that he says, 'For the right interpretation of the Article we need but these simple principles:—1. That the framers did not mean to contradict the Homilies, which they praised; 2. That the writers, both of the Articles and of the Homilies, did not use carefully guarded language without a meaning.' The solidarity between the Articles and Homilies is asserted in too unqualified a manner, such as I cannot think Bishop Forbes himself would maintain in the case of other doctrinal statements; but the principle of inter-

preting the Articles by other writings of the Reformation period is within certain limits a true one, while it is undoubtedly different from that 'interpretation by the hardest legal head,' which is elsewhere advocated.

The Twenty-sixth Article is made the subject of an unauthorised comment. After stating the error against which the Article is generally understood to be directed, Bishop Forbes proceeds :—

> This led on to another error at the time of the Reformation. The efficiency of the Sacraments was held no longer to depend on the interior disposition of the minister. Not the beneficial effect only, but the reality also of the Sacrament, was held to depend on the interior disposition, the faith of him to whom the Sacrament was administered. Our Article condemns both these notions. It lays down that the Sacraments have an objective value in virtue of their institution. Sacraments 'be effectual because of Christ's institution and promise,' therefore they do not depend on the state of the recipients.

Whether this is the doctrine of the Church of England, we shall see when we come to Article XXIX. All that is at present necessary to say is, that it is not expressed or implied in the Article before us. All that the Article does is to deny that the effect of the Sacraments is hindered by the unworthiness of the ministers, as it does in the title. It is a mere assumption to argue that because it is Christ's institution and promise that makes the Sacraments effectual, therefore they do not depend on the state of the recipient. In fact, Bishop Forbes has to introduce a distinction between reality and beneficial effect, of which the Article gives no hint. The more natural inference from the Article certainly would be, that the Sacraments by Christ's institution only take effect in the case of such as rightly and by faith receive

them. But this question, as I said, is better reserved for Article XXIX.

In treating the Twenty-eighth Article, Bishop Forbes contends that the Church of England does not really negative the authorised Roman doctrine of transubstantiation.

> It is self-evident (he says) that the English Article does not go directly against the Council of Lateran—(1) Because the term 'transubstantiatio' is a subordinate part of the Lateran Canon; (2) because . . . . even of the statement in which it occurs, our Article does not even touch upon the most important part—the change '*into* the substance of the body and blood of Christ;' (3) because there is ground to think that two entirely distinct meanings, and those not having the slightest bearing upon one another, have been given to the word 'substance.'

Without wishing to cavil about words, I would remark that a conclusion like this, depending upon three propositions, none of which would be admitted without argument, cannot be called 'self-evident.' As to the propositions themselves, it is sufficient to say, on the first, that whether the word 'transubstantiatio' be prominent or not in the Lateran Canon, Bishop Forbes agrees that it was used there with the special object of condemning Berengar, who had brought the word 'substance' into the controversy, while there is no doubt that, however understood, it was the received term at the time of the framing of the Articles to express the Roman doctrine. The second depends on the fact that the Article originally defined transubstantiation as the change of the substance of bread and wine into the substance of Christ's body and blood, and that the last eight words were afterwards omitted. It is possible that this may

have been done with an object, as we know that Bishop Geste, the reviser, if not the framer, of this Article, was anxious to conciliate those who held a high sacramental doctrine; it is possible, also, that the change may have been adopted to assimilate the English Article to the Latin, which simply has 'panis et vini transubstantiatio.' What gain could arise from the omission to anyone accustomed to strictness of thought it would be difficult to see: the change of substance must imply a change into some other substance, in whatever way the word 'substance' is understood. The real weight of the argument lies in the third proposition, the allegation that the framers of the Articles understood the word 'substance' in a different sense from that which it bears in the decrees of the Roman Church. According to Bishop Forbes, the word has two entirely different meanings, the one metaphysical and technical, the other physical and popular; and it is in this latter sense that the framers of our formularies understand it when they condemn transubstantiation. The argument is one which has recently been put with considerable plausibility by the author of the 'Kiss of Peace,' and answered in a learned and elaborate pamphlet by Mr. Sedley Taylor. Whether the controversy is yet exhausted I cannot say, but there can be no doubt that it is not so easy of decision as Bishop Forbes appears to think. Mr. Taylor has shown that Cranmer and Geste, in arguing against transubstantiation, recognised the distinction between substance and accident, and reasoned on that basis. He has also answered by anticipation one or two of the special points on which Bishop Forbes relies, the points themselves having previously been raised in the 'Kiss of Peace.' He shows that the 'Declaration on Kneeling' furnishes no presumption that its authors understood

substance in the popular sense, and that Bishop Geste himself, while recognising the distinction between substance and accidents, brings the very same objection against transubstantiation as is brought in the Article, that it 'overthroweth the nature of a sacrament.' If Bishop Forbes wishes to establish his position, he must adduce some further evidence than that which Mr. Taylor has disposed of. Meantime it is strange to see Bishop Forbes going further in one respect than Dr. Newman went in Tract XC. Dr. Newman, when he wrote the tract, thought that the doctrine condemned in the Article as having 'given occasion to many superstitions,' was exemplified in the story of the appearance of blood in the chalice to St. Odo, and in that of the child seen during administration by St. Wittekundus. Bishop Forbes takes a distinction:—

> It would not be superstitious to believe that, as in the case at Bolsena (assuming the circumstance to be true), our Lord attested the truth of His presence in the sacrament by an appearance of blood; but it would be superstitious to believe that that appearance was physical—that it was our Lord's blood, and as such to be received. And so it would be superstitious to believe that those appearances of Christ as a little child in the sacrament, which have from time to time been vouchsafed to God's servants, was the actual body of our Lord in its natural condition.

I do not mean to say that Bishop Forbes's explanation is inconsistent with Dr. Newman's argument, which is that what the Article condemns is the notion of a carnal presence; but I think that the scrupulousness which refuses at once to surrender these stories is scarcely in unison with the spirit in which the Article was written.

Bishop Forbes says, 'one cannot exaggerate the im-

portance of the words *given*, *taken*, and *eaten*,' in the third paragraph of this Article. By 'importance' he must mean importance with a view to the establishment of a particular interpretation: for the general purposes of the Article it is obvious that they require to be estimated with just the same accuracy, neither more nor less, as the other expressions in the Article which are not confessedly mere expressions of course. They are, undoubtedly, somewhat fuller than might have been expected, and for this fulness an interpreter must, of course, seek a reason. Dean Stanley [1] finds it in a wish to accumulate terms out of which Romanist, Lutheran, Zuinglian, and Calvinist might take their choice. Dr. Hawkins [2] says, 'the point of the argument is in the words, "only after a heavenly and spiritual manner:" and without asserting that the body of Christ is "given" at all, the Article declares that, whether regarded as "given," or "received," or "eaten," in any case it is only after a heavenly and spiritual manner.' While Dr. Hawkins is right in his view of the main thought of the sentence, I think he makes rather too little of the word 'given.' The Article, it seems to me, does commit itself to the statement that the Body is given, though only as an *obiter dictum*. But what does 'given' mean? Is it more than a correlative to 'taken and eaten?' Those who believe that what the priest distributes is in all cases our Lord's body may, of course, use the word, but so may those who believe that it is so only to the faithful. The only opinion which, it seems to me, the word does not favour is that which, as I said in the postscript to my paper on the Communion Office, seems to have dictated some of the alterations made by the

[1] *Letter to Bishop of London on Subscription*, p. 14.
[2] *Notes upon Subscription*, p. 25.

revisers of 1552, viz., that the act of communion is not connected with the actual reception of the elements; so that the insertion of the word may be compared with the changes made in the Communion Office by the Caroline revisers. There is some doubt about the precise theological position of Geste, the framer of this part of the Article. His opinions on the Eucharist are to be gathered from his Treatise against the Prevee (Privy or Private) Masse, published 1548, from some notes on the Prayer-Book sent to Burghley, apparently undated, from a letter to Burghley on this very Article, dated December 22, 1566, and from another letter to the same person, on various passages in the Articles, without a signature, but apparently in his handwriting, and supposed to be written in May, 1571. If the two first documents stood alone, his leanings would seem to be Protestant: if we had only the last two, we should suppose that he held a high sacramental doctrine.[1] On the particular point before us, however, there is no necessary contrariety in his statements. His letter of 1566 asserts that the words 'after a heavenly and spiritual manner *only*,' as used by him, 'did not exclude the presence of Christ's body in the Sacrament, but only the grossness and sensibleness in the receiving thereof.' In his treatise he had said, 'that we as materially and truly, though not grosslier (grossly or ?) sensibly, but ghostly receive and eat Christ's body and drink His blood as we do the foresaid' (the bread and wine). But what we are concerned with, after all, is the meaning he expressed in the Article, recollecting, as we must, that he would naturally choose

[1] He is contrasted with some other bishops as having preached in defence of the real presence by a Roman Catholic controversialist of the time (Dorman's *Disproof of M. Nowell's Reproof*, Antwerp, 1565, pp. 52A, 103B, a rare book, to which my attention was directed by Mr. Sedley Taylor, if indeed I ought not rather to name Mr. H. R. Droop, to whom he refers).

terms which, while conveying his own view, would be accepted by his episcopal brethren. That meaning I believe to be that which I have stated above, an assertion of the connection of our Lord's presence with the elements, excluding the notion of a carnal presence, but not entering further into definition on the matter. For such further definition we must look to the next Article.

On the concluding sentence of the Article, Bishop Forbes repeats what he had said on Article XXV., that the Article does not prohibit the practices mentioned, but merely says that they are no part of Christ's institution. Accordingly, he sketches the history of the several practices, much as a commentator on Article XXV. might sketch the history of Infant Baptism, and ends by saying, 'It is unnecessary to go into the question of the worship of Our Lord in the Sacrament, after the exhaustive treatise of John Keble, τοῦ μακαρίτου, to which the reader is referred.' If this is constructive exposition, it is so in the sense of building up again the things which the Reformers destroyed.

We now come to the chief battle-ground of the Eucharistic doctrine in the Articles, Article XXIX. There can be little doubt that it was regarded as such at the time when it was put forth. It originally formed part of the revised Articles of 1563; but it was omitted when they came to be published in that year, and it did not finally take its place till 1571. There is a letter, from Parker to Burghley,[1] implying that difficulties were felt regarding it; and another, supposed to be by Geste, also to Burghley, begging that it may not be adopted,[2] 'be-

[1] Parker's Correspondence (Parker Society), p. 381.

[2] Perry, *Declaration*, p. 200. The passage is further important, as showing how the writer understood the expression afterwards introduced into the Catechism, 'reception by the faithful.'

cause it is quite contrary to the Scripture and to the doctrine of the Fathers.' As to its object, I do not see that there can be any reasonable doubt. The question whether the wicked receive the body of Christ, or not, was a very common one at the Reformation, as anyone who will look at the works of the Reformers may see. It was, in fact, one of the tests applied by the Romanists in their examinations of the accused Reformers at the time of the Marian persecution, the question of Adoration being another. It is one of the principal subjects discussed by Cranmer in his controversy with Gardiner. There was no dispute that the wicked did not receive the 'virtus Sacramenti;' whether they received the 'res Sacramenti,' or merely the 'signum Sacramenti,' was the point at issue. Article XXV. speaks only of the 'virtus Sacramenti.' Article XXVIII. touches on the 'res Sacramenti' when it says that the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith, but does not go into the question. The present Article deals with the question, and deals with it as it was dealt with (I believe) by the Reformers generally, denying that the wicked receive more than the 'signum.'

Such seems to me the natural explanation of the Article: now let us see what Bishop Forbes has to allege against it. He first asserts that the reception of the 'res Sacramenti' by the wicked is required by the language of St. Paul in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. To this it can only be said that many expositors do not feel the necessity of so understanding St. Paul's words, and that there is no evidence that the Reformers felt it. He appeals to expressions in the Communion Office, 'receive *the same* unworthily,' 'unworthily receiving *thereof*,' 'receive *it* unworthily,' the reference to Judas, the reference to St. Paul's language, the words in the Prayer of Humble Ac-

cess, and those in the second Post-Communion Prayer. As to the first three passages, no one doubts that good and bad alike receive the Communion, in the sense in which the word is ordinarily understood—*i.e.*, the consecrated elements.[1] The reference to Judas, like that to St. Paul, proves no more than that the Reformers, like the sacred writers, looked upon unworthy reception as an act of profanation which would be followed by punishment; which, again, is not in dispute. The other two passages were discussed in the postscript to my previous paper. Bishop Forbes then urges the words about unworthy reception at the end of Article XXV. They have reference, as I said just now, to the 'virtus Sacramenti.' As to any argument based on the adoption of St. Paul's words, it must of course stand or fall with the interpretation of those words. He next comes to the words of the present Article. The Fathers, he says, generally assert that the wicked, in some sense, do receive the body of Christ—*i.e.*, they receive the 'res Sacramenti.' St. Augustine, in other passages than that quoted in the Article, admits such a reception; therefore, the passage quoted must be understood in that sense. This is rather a proof that the framers of the Article *ought* to have meant a certain thing than that they *did* mean it. Further, he appeals to the words, 'yet are they in nowise partakers of Christ.' 'To be a partaker of Christ is the language of St. Paul. Our Article uses St. Paul's language in St. Paul's meaning. No one ought to attempt to maintain that our Article uses the words of Holy Scripture in a non-Scriptural sense.' This is a hazardous canon to lay down, especially for one who

[1] This question was raised at the time of the Reformation, and answered by the Protestants much as I have answered it. See Redman in Foxe, vol. vi. pp. 269 foll. ed. 1846, quoted by Perry, *Declaration*, p. 29.

believes, with Bishop Forbes, that the Church is the one interpreter of Scripture. Surely the question of the meaning of the words of Scripture in themselves is distinct from the question of the meaning attributed to them in a formulary of the Church where they are quoted. In interpreting an Article, at any rate, we are to interpret its applications of Scripture by themselves, not by our views of Scripture. In the present case, however, I suspect the discrepancy is one of Bishop Forbes's own creation. The Article says that the wicked are *in no wise* partakers of Christ, neither beneficially nor in the sense of partaking of the 'res Sacramenti.' The implication would seem to be, that to allow that they are partakers of Christ, though only to their condemnation, is to allow too much. I do not advance this as a certain interpretation, but as a highly probable one, agreeing as it does not only with the title of the Article, but with its whole tenor. That the wording may at the same time have been so formed as to give a *locus standi* for those who, like the author of the letter ascribed to Bishop Geste, did not sympathise with the Article is of course possible. But, urges Bishop Forbes, we happen to know over and above that the scriptural meaning was the meaning of the framer of the Article. How do we know this? From Archbishop Parker's letter to Burghley, in which he says that he is still advisedly of opinion concerning St. Augustine's authority 'concerning so much wherefore they be alleged in the Article.' This must mean that, though the words would not prove that the wicked do not receive the 'res Sacramenti,' they are enough to prove that the wicked do not receive the 'virtus Sacramenti.' Now all that we happen to know is that Burghley, for some reason unstated, objected to St. Augustine's authority as alleged in the Article, and that

Parker maintained that it was sufficient for the purpose for which it was alleged. The nature of Burghley's objection and the purpose of the Article, as conceived by Parker, we must supply from conjecture.[1] From the letter itself (which Bishop Forbes does not give entire) it would seem that Burghley was, so to say, the spokesman of some men who 'varied' from the doctrine of the Article. The only objections which we know to have been taken at the time are those contained in Geste's (?) letter to Burghley, so that the probability would appear to be that these are referred to. Strype assumes without doubt that they came from the Papists. The reference to St. Augustine certainly creates a difficulty on Bishop Forbes's hypothesis: *primâ facie* it unquestionably seems to deny that the 'res Sacramenti' is received by the wicked. Why should Parker have adduced it at all, on the supposition that such was not his meaning, when, as Bishop Forbes tells us, and as Gardiner had shown in his work against Cranmer, there are other passages in St. Augustine which would have expressed his real intention unquestionably? As to the antithetical structure of the Article, which Bishop Forbes urges in support of his view, it proves nothing. The logical opposition is between partaking of Christ and eating the sign or sacrament of so great a thing. Nor is he more fortunate in his attempt to rebut the evidence which the title of the Article bears to its meaning. If, indeed, as he asserts, the grammatical structure of the words of the Article would not admit the meaning expressed in the title, the title, as

[1] I am aware of the argument founded by Dr. Pusey (*Real Presence the Doctrine of English Church*, pp. 275 foll.) on the passages of Prosper to which Parker refers: but it does not seem to me to overbalance the general probability on the other side. What I am concerned to maintain is merely that Parker's letter has not that decisive value which Bishop Forbes attributes to it.

I said some pages ago, could not be allowed to overbear the Article. But I shall be surprised if anyone who has followed this discussion agrees with Bishop Forbes that the words of the Article will not grammatically bear the meaning that the wicked do not eat the body of Christ. Such a meaning may be contrary to the sense of Scripture, contrary to the teaching of the Fathers, but contrary to the words of the Article most assuredly it is not.

The only other comments which I have occasion to notice are those on Articles XXXI. and XXXII.

Bishop Forbes maintains that the Eucharist is a commemorative sacrifice, available for the dead as well as for the living, and that the Thirty-first Article does not contradict this. He asserts, first, that it is a sacrifice; and, secondly, that it is available as aforesaid. The first he proves, as usual, from the Fathers, and then quotes Sir William Palmer and the Bishop of Exeter to show that it is reconcilable with the Article. What the Article is likely to have meant is a question which he does not consider, though, as we have seen, he is not indisposed to raise it in other cases. He does, however, indirectly pass judgment on this question, when, after speaking of the testimony of the early Church, he says, 'It is probable that the English Reformers were not conversant with the Eastern Liturgies; otherwise we cannot conceive how they could have preferred the Second to the First Book of Edward, or have rested content with the emendations at the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth.' With reference to the extent of the efficacy of the Eucharist, he quotes the passage from the Post-Communion Prayer discussed in my former paper, 'we and all thy whole Church,' which he says 'many English divines have applied, without blame,' to those in the intermediate state, and states that 'the Church of England has judicially

ruled in her supreme tribunal that prayer for the dead is not unlawful.' The remainder of his comment is chiefly devoted to showing that the doctrine of a continuing Eucharistic sacrifice is not inconsistent with the doctrine of the one oblation of Christ once offered, not that the Church of England does not consider it inconsistent. Yet, in an explanation of Anglican formularies, the latter would have seemed the point chiefly to be laboured.

In the Thirty-second Article Bishop Forbes lays stress on the title. In 1553 it ran, 'The state of single life is commanded of no man by the word of God;' in Latin, 'Cœlibatus ex verbo Dei præcipitur nemini:' in 1571 it was changed into, 'Of the Marriage of Priests,' 'De Conjugio Sacerdotum.' The change extends to the body of the Article: in 1553 the obligation to celibacy was denied of the clergy alone, the liberty of all other men being left to be inferred; now it is denied of the clergy as of other Christian men: in 1553 the heading spoke of a 'præceptum,' the Article of a 'mandatum;' now the two are combined: lastly, the present heading introduces the important word 'sacerdotum.' How Bishop Forbes should think 'the marked contrast of the clergy with other Christian men an observable thing,' is not easy to see. The simple account of the matter is that the clergy, who had been excepted from the liberty to marry under the old religion, are now declared to be excepted no longer. The original Article said the same thing, but it said it awkwardly, stating, as it were, the major premiss of the syllogism in the title, the conclusion in the Article itself. As for the combination of mandate and precept, it removes any question that might arise on the interchangeable use of the two words, while it makes the cogency of the rule of celibacy more stringent, and, by conse-

quence, the exemption from it more complete. Any significance that there may be in the assertion that bishops, presbyters, and deacons are all in some sense 'sacerdotes,' I have no wish to ignore. Only it should be recollected that the more is made of the word, the more force is given to the Article. In whatever sense the English clergy are priests, in that sense it is true that their sacerdotal character leaves them free to marry or not as they like. Before I leave the question of the heading, I would remind Bishop Forbes that Article XXIX. is also one of those which had their titles revised. Originally it stood in the Latin, 'Impii non manducant Corpus Christi in usu Cœnæ;' afterwards it was altered into, 'De manducatione Corporis Christi, et impios illud non manducare.' Is no argument as to the meaning of the Article to be founded on the fact that, while the title was altered, the words which it is sought to deprive of their strict meaning were retained? In the latter part of his comment on the present Article, Bishop Forbes maintains that by leaving the choice of a married or single life to the conscience of each person, clerical or lay, it really implies that the question is not free to the individual. This is of course true; not so the corollary Bishop Forbes draws from it, that the very circumstances of the clergy make them more responsible in the matter than the laity, or that 'the Church of England leans to the celibate,' though 'it does not enjoin it.'[1] I do not say that the Article lays any burden on those who wish to decide their individual case on what may be called professional grounds; but it expressly declines to bias their judgment.

[1] This seems to be made out from the Marriage Service, which speaks of those who have not the gift of continence. But what the Marriage Service says it says to all; and any opinion that the clergy have a special duty in the matter, whether an admissible one or not, is at any rate a private one.

A few words on the comment on the Ratification will bring me to the end of what I have to say.

> The Articles (says Bishop Forbes) are primarily a State document, made ecclesiastical by the acceptance of the two Convocations in 1562 and 1571. . . . . One treats them very differently from the decrees of a Provincial Synod of the Church of England. Convocation . . . . is not a Council in the strictly ecclesiastical sense.[1] . . . . It only binds the conscience as a result of subscription.

I do not object to this view of our duty to the Articles, though I dissent from the remarks that follow (remarks to which I have already adverted), that subscription only binds us to the plain literal and grammatical sense, interpreted by the hardest legal head. But there are two questions which I am desirous to ask. Is it nothing in Bishop Forbes's estimation that the Articles, as we have them, though enacted by Parliament, were framed by the bishops? Is it nothing in Bishop Forbes's estimation, as a Scotch bishop, that the Articles were accepted by the Convention or Synod of Laurencekirk?

I have spoken of Bishop Forbes's work as what it professes to be—an explanation of the Articles. If it were possible to regard it in any other light, it would be easy to do justice to its merits. It contains much interesting theological argument, and many sketches of the history of doctrines, presented in a lively if somewhat desultory manner, and occasionally relieved by illustrations and quotations which will please the literary reader. The spirit in which he writes is earnest, and the tone which he adopts towards opponents in general conciliatory. It

[1] He calls it, however, a Synod, in the Chronological Table prefixed to Vol. I.

is as an exegetical work that it has come before me; whether I have estimated it justly as such I leave others to judge.

In conclusion, I have to say that I am not ignorant that other writers have maintained many of Bishop Forbes's interpretations on substantially the same grounds; but I have thought it better to deal with his work alone, being as it is the most complete and systematic exposition of a certain theory of the Articles, than to extend the field of controversy further.

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